

# Big Four rail station has uncertain future

*Railroad Station Historic Landmarks (WV)*

By DONNA CHRISTENBERRY  
Staff Writer

The fate of the "Big Four" railroad station, Terre Haute's last remaining station, may be known in a couple of weeks, according to Trainmaster William McLean of Conrail.

The building, in the 500 block of North Seventh Street, was condemned by the city housing inspector's office earlier this month.

McLean said a feasibility study has been sent to Conrail's corporate headquarters in Philadelphia. A decision is expected in a couple of weeks as to whether the railroad will keep the property and renovate, or sell, or raze the structure.

Several factors enter into the decision, said McLean. Corporate officials will be looking at local interest expressed in saving the station as well as use by local Conrail officials. A long-term lease on the structure held by Amtrak also comes into play.

"People from ISU and other groups have wanted to save the station and use it for everything from a restaurant to an art gallery to a theater," McLean said. Whether it could be used for any purpose depends on if it can be restored and for how much, he

said. S JAN 27 1983

Currently part of the building is being used for storage by Conrail, McLean noted.

David Buchanan, an art major at Indiana State University, is one of the people working on ideas for converting the building. However, he admits that he and other interested people at ISU are still in the embryo stage of planning.

This effort is mainly a student one. "We're talking with student groups to come up with a proposal for ISU and Conrail." The evaluation and planning is expected to take five weeks.

Buchanan would like to see Big Four turned into an art gallery where artists from a 300-mile radius could display and sell their works year-round, and dreams of it being used for community groups and theater groups.

The first order of business is determining costs. Students from the School of Technology are evaluating the building to see what repairs are needed and what the costs would be.

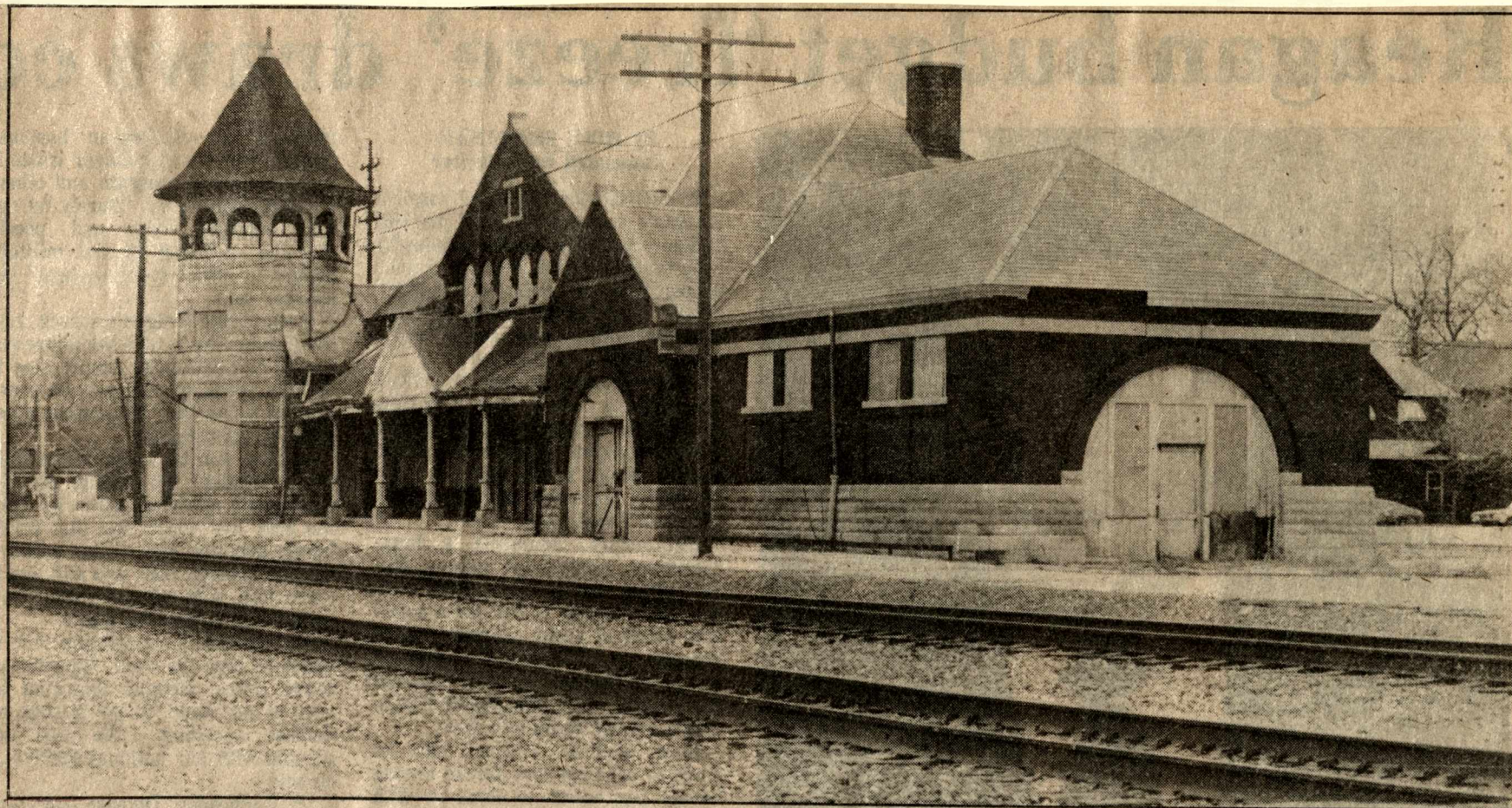
Some interior design students are also involved, Buchanan said.

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Community Affairs File





*The Big Four passenger station at Seventh Street and Tippecanoe*

(Staff Photo: Bob Poynter)



Big Four Depot

# Big Four

Historic Landmarks (WV)

## Nothing left but moving memories

1986  
T's DEC 14 1987

By Dave Delaney  
Tribune-Star Staff Reporter

An orchestra played on a hot and humid July 27 in 1889, as thousands watched the dedication of the Big Four railroad station.

The headline in the next day's edition of The Terre Haute Gazette reported the station was dedicated "With Flowers, Music and Speech Making."

Big Four's demise attracted far less hoopla. It was torn down during a few cold days last week. Nothing remains of the once-impressive structure at Seventh and Tippecanoe streets but the ground it stood on.

But the vacant lot land tells nothing of the memories of thousands who used the station when passenger trains were a popular mode of transportation.

Among the many who found their way to Terre Haute via the Big Four station was a 14-year-old Greek boy who didn't speak a word of English. He was on his way to Seattle on that day in 1910, but briefly got off the train and lost his ticket. Railroad officials wouldn't let him back on the train, so he stayed here to make a life for himself in America.

"I hate to see a building like that go down," said Mayor P. Pete Chalos, the son of that 14-year-old Greek youngster. "I hope something good happens to both the Terre Haute House and the Indiana Theatre."

The Big Four Station didn't come tumbling down without a fight. The Vigo Preservation Alliance battled the powers at

Consolidate Rail Corp. for two years before a fleet of yellow bulldozers completed their work.

"Our period of sadness has passed," said Fred Nation, secretary-treasurer of the Alliance. Nation said interest existed in turning the aging station into a restaurant. "However our potential investors couldn't wait any longer."

Conrail plans to straighten its tracks for trains coming through town in that area.

Nation said the good part of the Big Four demise is that the community is now aware of the necessity to preserve some of its old buildings. "There's now a higher public awareness that we are losing our heritage," said Nation. "Some old buildings need to be saved, but certainly not all of them."

Nation said the increase of privately owned automobiles led to the demise of railroading nationwide.

Retired carpenter Emmett Moore, 98, of 2105 Seabury St. said as a boy he used to watch the trains come in at the Big Four. "You used to see lots of horse-drawn taxicabs then," he recalled. "I remember they'd feed the horse oats from a basket."

Maurice Williams Sr. of 325 S. Fourth St. said he remembers the Big Four station well from its heyday. "It was a nice depot with marble floors," he recalled. "I used to room right across the street from it at the Great Northern Hotel."

Virginia Irwin of 1728 Ohio Blvd. said she remembered listening to Franklin D. Roosevelt give a speech from the back of a train that stopped at the Big Four. "I almost got mashed in

that big crowd," she said.

Although the Big Four is now but a memory, Nation said Conrail acknowledged the alliance's request to save a number of historical parts of the station including the stained-glass windows, the Big Four seal in the floor, the large tower atop the

building, two large wooden benches and other items.

"They'll be rebuilt as a gazebo either near the site of the depot or maybe at Dobbs Park," Nation said.

Jim Reid, one of the men hired to take down the Big Four, said an elderly man stopped to talk to

workers the other day as they were leveling the station. "He told us how his wife kissed him goodbye as he went off to war at the Big Four," he related. "Then he told us that they saw their son off from this station, but that he never came back. He was almost in tears."

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Community Affairs File





Photo courtesy James T. Hekman

**Passage point:** The city welcomed immigrants, and sent sons and daughters off to war from the Big Four station



T JUN 16 1985

# Vigo preservationists, Congress try to get depot issue on track

By Liz Ciancone  
Tribune-Star Staff Reporter

The future of the old Conrail train station on North Seventh Street is in limbo — again.

Start with Conrail. It owns the building. Norfolk & Southern Railway has offered to buy the government's 85-percent interest in Conrail but the offer is challenged by a group of investors (reportedly consisting of current Conrail management) headed by the Morgan Stanley firm of New York.

The Department of Transportation has agreed that the government's interest in Conrail should be sold, but approval of the sale depends on Congress. Hearings on the matter are under way.

All that leaves folks in Terre Haute wondering.

"The property will be sold, but to whom and when? This could drag on," said Fred Nation, secretary/treasurer of the Vigo County Preservation Alliance, a group seeking to preserve the station as a local historic landmark.

Negotiations between the local preservation group and Conrail resumed two weeks ago, Nation said.

"They offered to give us (Vigo County Preservation Alliance) the building and \$25,000 on the condition we move the building," Nation said. "However, estimates on moving and renovating it (the depot) run from \$150,000 to \$300,000 and we can't afford that."

Nation said the alliance had

hoped the deal with Norfolk & Southern could be completed because that company is reported to be more cooperative with state and national historic preservation groups.

Conrail began demolition of the station several months ago following a disposal of a suit brought against Conrail by a couple who thought they had an agreement to buy the property. Demolition was halted by court order.

Nation said Conrail wants to remove the building so that a backcurve can be straightened "not to improve speed, but to cut maintenance costs," which are higher because of the more-frequent inspection required on the curve. Apparently only the tower of the structure stands in the way of the project, Nation said.

Conrail reportedly has told the local group that no money has been budgeted to move the track for at least the next two years.

Jordan Lewis, local attorney who represented Conrail in the lawsuit brought by a local couple, said he had not been otherwise involved in handling legal affairs for Conrail and could not comment on current negotiations between the railroad company and the Preservation Alliance.

If the matter drags on much longer Norfolk & Southern may lose interest. In testimony offered before a House energy and commerce subcommittee, Robert Claytor, chairman and chief executive officer of Norfolk & Southern, said his company could not afford to tie up its resources

indefinitely while Congress evaluates its \$1.2 billion bid for Conrail.

"We have said we have until the end of the year to get this through or we will consider going elsewhere," Claytor said. "When we are devoting 75 to 80 percent of management time to a transaction, we can only do it for so long."

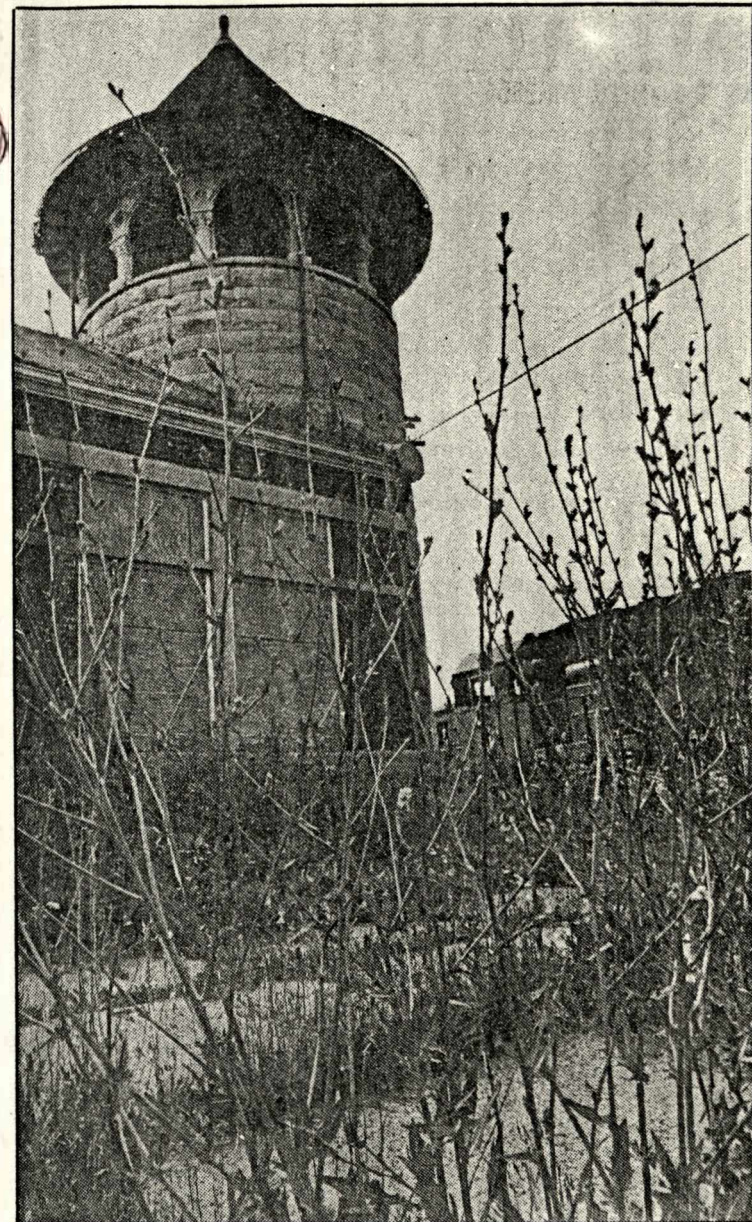
Steve Shaffer, press secretary for U.S. Rep. John Myers, R-Ind., said last week, "Rep. Florio (James Florio, D-New Jersey, chairman of the House subcommittee on Commerce Transportation and Tourism) is reported to be pretty open on the sale proposal. The hearings are really an effort to determine fact."

Whether additional hearings will be scheduled depends entirely on whether current testimony suggests other avenues to explore, Shaffer said.

Asked what would happen if Norfolk & Southern pulled out of the bidding as Claytor hinted it might, Shaffer said, "utter chaos." The entire sale issue would have to be rethought.

But he said there was a good chance Congress might act on the current proposal before Norfolk & Southern's deadline.

"The administration's bill in the Senate has been reported out of committee to the floor, but has not been scheduled for action," he said. Shaffer looks for the Senate to complete its scheduled hearings and get the bill to the floor next month, leaving six months before Claytor's year-end deadline for both houses to act.



Tribune-Star/Bob Poynter

High weeds: Unsightly view at Conrail station.



# Big Four Station: is it approaching the end of the line?

*Railroads (T.H.)*

Sp DEC 18 1976

## Terre Haute's last railroad station is deteriorating

by Leslie Miller

Horses, buggies and old steam engine trains are brought to mind when you step into the 78-year-old railroad station at Seventh and Tippecanoe streets.

Long silk taffeta dresses with multiple petticoats, bustles, men's derbies, top hats and long Chesterfields seem to garb the memories of the people who once frequented this center of rail activity.

Today the building smells of rusty, rotting wood and pigeon droppings, which have taken hold since it was the bustling Big Four Station.

And unless the Vigo County Historical Society can convince someone to purchase the depot for possible restoration as a restaurant, it may eventually be leveled.

Restoration could cost from \$200,000 to \$250,000, says Robert Durfey of Con Rail, the company that presently owns the depot.

Durfey thinks that the building should be leveled because of restoration expenses. "It does not seem to be of any way useful to the community, businessmen or railroad," he said.

In bygone days the railroad station traffic included some passengers rushing from trains, bolting across the street to the Great Northern Hotel situated south of it, hurriedly grabbing a six-pack of beer, then winding up in a mad frenzy, kicking up dust trying to catch departing trains.

The Tiffany-led church glass windows are boarded up, preventing sunlight from entering the depot that is leased to Amtrak by Con Rail for passenger waiting facilities.

This last remaining depot in Terre Haute has a Victorian motif. Construction began in 1897 and was completed in 1898.

The depot's architect was C. J. Jacobs and one of the builders was William R. McKeen and Company. George W. Kitredge was chief engineer for the project.

The building which was originally sought by Chicago, Cleveland, Cincinnati and St. Louis Railroad Company contained a ladies waiting area, restrooms, parcel room, main waiting room, baggage room, express company's room and a gentlemen's smoking room.

Exterior features of the depot are roof



The benches are the only furnishings left in the Big Four Station.

Photo by Godfrey.

arches carved from Indiana limestone which was produced by Terre Haute Pipe and Brick Company, founded in 1891. More than 100 Grecian figure limestone castings adorn the upper windows.

Its three-story tower contained a bell which was used until 1910 to announce departure times.

Sun baked bricks compose the building. Posts supporting the arched room, portico-style, between the building and the tracks were made of steel in 1898 by Prox Brinkman Company.

Many of the stained glass windows have been broken, holes have been punched in the plaster and linoleum now covers hardwood floors in some of the depot's rooms.

"When we had all the offices down there, fuel, oil, electricity and water payments amounted to \$2,800 to \$3,000 a month," Durfey says.

Sale of the depot is left up to the company's board of trustees if someone should be interested in buying it.

In the meantime, only memories sustain the Big Four Station.

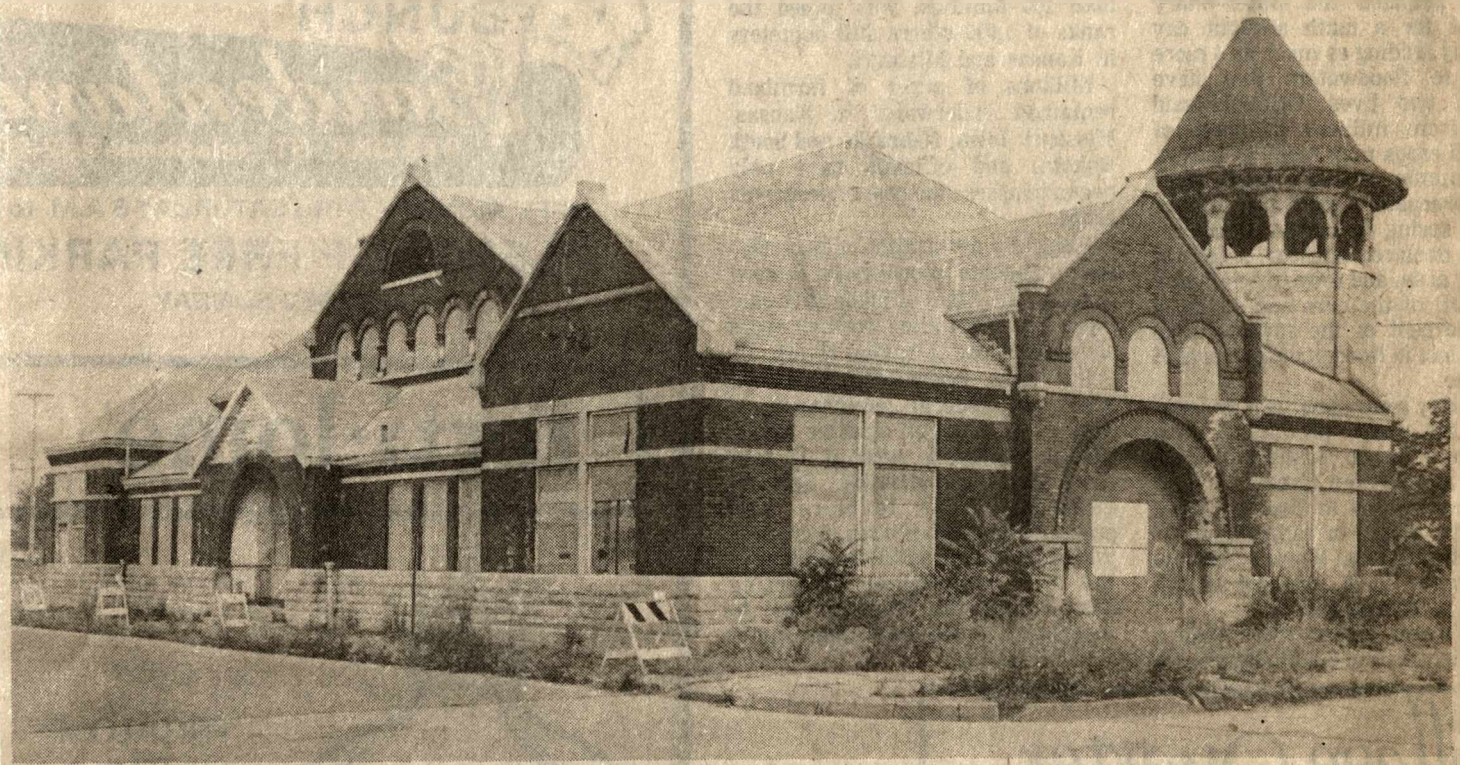


T s JUN 22 1984

*Historic Landmarks (WN)*

Community Affairs File

# The Big 4 Train Station Can Be Saved!



## We Must Act Now!

The Big 4 Station is one of Terre Haute's most distinctive landmarks and a distinguished example of our community's vanishing heritage. But it is in great danger! The wrecking ball has been stopped for the moment and the building is "99% intact" according to Historic Landmarks of Indiana.

To save the station for restoration and reuse, we must show community support. We are asking now only for your show of support to convince railroad and public authorities that Terre Haute wants this station preserved.

Please fill out the coupon below and mail it today!  
We cannot afford to wait.

**Yes, I want to help save the Big 4 Station.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

**VIGO**  
**PRESERVATION**  
**ALLIANCE**  
INCORPORATED

Mail to:  
**Vigo Preservation Alliance,**  
**Incorporated**  
P.O. Box 2020  
Terre Haute, Indiana 47802

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## Sitting and waiting

Autumn is coming, and the turning of the leaves perhaps signals the time in the life of the Big Four depot along North Seventh Street. A decision by Greene Circuit Judge David K.

Johnson has paved the way for demolition by Conrail, and only the refusal of the city to grant a demolition permit apparently stands in the way.

TS SEP 18 1984

Tribune-Star/Bob Poynter

Community Affairs File

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T's AUG 9 1983

# Old train station sold for new toy factory

Historic Landmarks (T.H.)

By John Halladay  
Tribune-Star Staff Reporter

A melodious "who-o-o-o," like that produced by a railroad train, drifted out of the mayor's conference room Monday at Terre Haute City Hall.

Jon Devereaux, 1327 N. Ninth St., was demonstrating one of the hundreds of wooden toys to be made under his and his wife Lisza's guidance at the old North Seventh Street railroad station.

The Devereauxs are buying the station from Conrail and will convert the structure into a toy factory and showroom. Their company name is Old Tyme Toys.

It may be after the first of the year before the sale is completed, Jon Devereaux said. Until then, the Devereauxs and a staff of four helpers will be making the toys in the Devereaux's home. Within 12 to 18 months after the toy operation moves to the former train station, the Devereauxs plan to hire 20 to 40 people.

"We don't care if they have ever seen a band saw before," Jon Devereaux said. What they'll be looking for, his wife added, is "somebody that still has some 'kid' in 'em" to help make the toys.

Demand for the toys is expected to be high. "We're negotiating some very, very big contracts right now," Devereaux said.

The Devereauxs also plan to restore the train station to its former beauty. "We want to make it



## Toy factory

Tribune-Star/Bob Poynter

The North Seventh Street Railroad Station is being bought by Jon and Lisza Devereaux to be used as a toy factory and showroom. Among the toys to be made in the old station is the Name Train — a series of wooden train cars, each with a letter on top to spell out a person's name.

look good, like it used to," Devereaux said. The Devereauxs asked anyone with old pictures of the station that could be loaned to get in touch with them.

All the toys the Devereauxs make are wooden. "It's a back-to-nature type thing," Devereaux said.

Jon, who formerly worked with computers, and Lisza, who formerly produced plays, describe their toy

business as "a hobby that got out of hand."

The Devereauxs also plan to open a craft shop in the former train station.

Mayor P. Pete Chalos said he sees the new business as an asset to the community.

Neither the Devereauxs nor Conrail would disclose the purchase price of the station.



# Restaurant possible for train station

*Historic Landmarks (WV)*

T: OCT 27 1985

## Community Affairs File

A local couple is looking at the Big Four train station with an eye toward converting it into a restaurant, a person close to the situation tells us.

The prospective buyers have had an architect look at the building, but are not far enough along to take their proposal to financial institutions to see if the project is feasible.

"Over the last 1½ years, there have been a number of prospects, but none have ever been potentially as good as this one," the source said. "They have the financial ability to pull this off if the numbers work out."

The fly in the ointment, of course, is Conrail, which wants to remove the building so it can straighten out a curve in the tracks, and "there's no reason to be optimistic about Conrail changing its mind," the source said.

Conrail has offered to give the building to the Vigo Preservation Alliance, along with \$25,000 to move it, but we're told that figure is about one-tenth of what it would cost to move the structure.

## Brief cases



Chait, a Tribune-Star reporter for three years, concentrates on coverage of business matters.

By Jan Chait  
Tribune-Star Staff Reporter

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TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA



station

S MAR 2 1983

# Potential investors tour Big Four railroad

By DONNA CHRISTENBERRY  
Staff Writer

The Big Four railroad station on north Seventh Street perked up at the possibility of a new lease on life Tuesday. Approximately 50 interested persons, including potential investors, were invited by Conrail to tour the station's interior and ask questions.

A positive tone pervaded the dank interior of the structure.

"Conrail is interested in doing something constructive," said Michael Barnes of the Terre Haute Department of Redevelopment.

The company would like to sell in the near future. According to reports, Conrail officials soon will set a minimum price and invite interested parties to bid. Bids are tentatively scheduled to be opened March 15 in the Cincinnati real estate offices of Conrail.

Papers concerning the bidding process and any restrictions on the purchaser, such as erecting a fence between the station and the tracks, will be sent only to those who attended Tuesday's meeting and signed a sheet indicating they wanted to buy.

Any proposed sale must be approved by officials at Conrail's headquarters in Philadelphia.

The city's role in directing investors to Conrail is over, said Barnes.

"It's now up to the private sector and Conrail." However, Barnes said, tax abatements and industrial bonds could be made available to help investors renovate the structure and start a business.

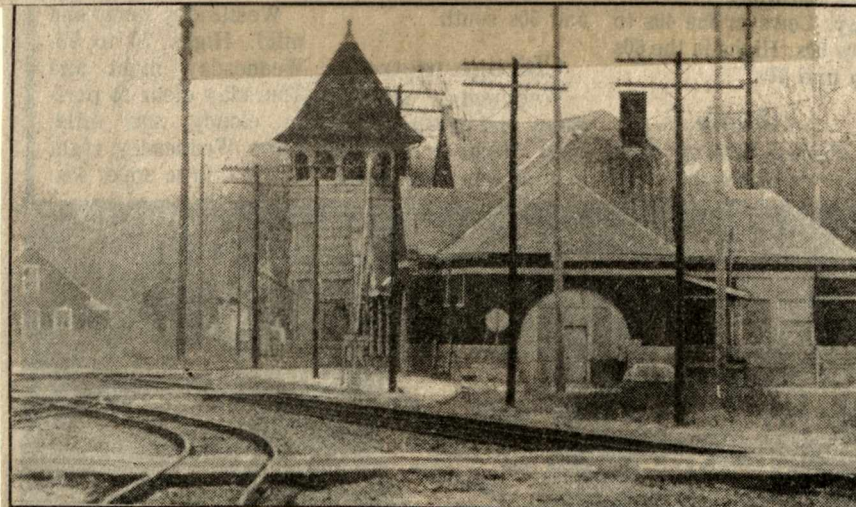
What kind of business? The restaurant idea keeps popping up, whether as part of a chain or as a unique local eatery.

Some Indiana State University students also are continuing their study on the feasibility of turning the station into an art gallery where area artists could display and sell their works.

A railroad museum also has been mentioned.

Trainmaster William McLean said people asked "questions on the type of heating system, when the building was last heated, when it was last used, the type of roof, and the size of the building."

The crowd examined every nook of the building but the tower, since no ladder was available. Notepads and tape measures received a workout.

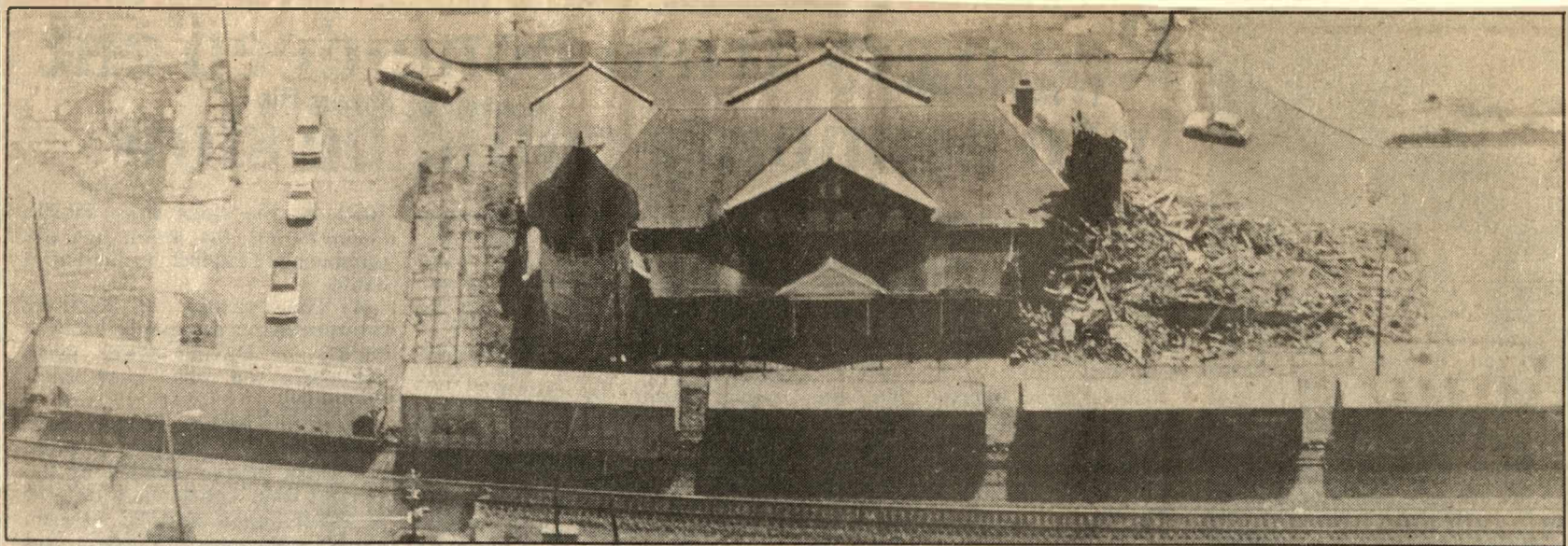


(Staff Photo: Bob Poynter)

**POSSIBILITY OF NEW LEASE ON LIFE?** — Potential investors were among approximately 50 people who toured Terre Haute's Big Four Railroad Depot Tuesday.

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Tribune-Star/Paul Hightower

Yet another court date: Depot awaits another hearing — this time in Greene County.

# Big Four hearing set Aug. 23

Community Affairs File

Historic Landmarks (W.U.)

AUG 11 1984

A bid for another preliminary injunction barring continued demolition of the Big Four Depot is scheduled for hearing in Greene Circuit Court on Aug. 23, a court spokesman said Thursday.

An injunction imposed by Vigo Circuit Judge Robert H. Brown was dissolved in July by Sullivan Circuit Judge George E. Taylor after Taylor received the case on a change of venue.

Local attorney Teri M. Lorenz is seeking the injunction on behalf of

Jon Devereaux, 1329 N. Ninth St., who wanted to resurrect the depot, closed in the early 1970s, and convert it into a toy-manufacturing operation.

A year ago Devereaux signed a contract to buy the property from Consolidated Rail Corp. The contract was subject to management approval which was rejected in late May.

Lorenz is using the nine-month lapse between the contract signing and Conrail's rejection in part to

press a claim by Devereaux and his wife Lisza that they relied on assurances from Conrail that the deal would go through.

The only public statement Conrail officials have made is that they intend to demolish the 87-year-old structure to accommodate a straightening of nearby tracks — some of which have been replaced during a six-months track upgrading project.

But a spokesman for U.S. Rep. John Myers, who has made in-

quiries to Conrail officials about saving the depot, has reportedly indicated that Conrail would rather demolish the depot. Conrail reportedly said demolition would cost less than legal expenses associated with selling the property.

Lorenz quoted a Conrail attorney early in the depot fray saying property ownership is clouded. Conrail owns the depot, but has a 99-year renewable lease on the property with Sophie Wheeler, dating to 1898.

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Community Affairs File



Historic Landmarks (TH) Community Affairs File

# Once bustling, now still

T s APR 1 1 1982

## Terre Haute's train depot waits, lonely and defaced

By JERRY PHILLIPS  
Tribune-Star Staff Writer

It was a world apart from the rest of the city, that area near the New York Central tracks.

Around the corner at Seventh and Tippecanoe, past the Great Northern Hotel, stood the Red Mill Pub.

There, at a table covered with a red and white checked cloth, you could spend an afternoon solving the world's problems or telling jokes as foam-topped pitchers were delivered on antique Coca-Cola trays.

The Great Northern, conceived by A. R. Monninger and C. J. Dressler, was built in 1898, the same year as the Big Four Depot.

An 1899 "Terre Haute Express" article preserved by the Vigo County Historical Society, describes the facility:

They (Monninger and Dressler) purchased property just opposite the new station, where they erected the well-equipped hotel. They have an up-to-date bar connected with the hotel and handle only the finest of wines and liquors, together with the best domestic and imported cigars. The hotel has twenty nice sleeping rooms and a cafe ...

Across the street was the railway station, the pride of the Chicago, Cleveland, Cincinnati and St. Louis Railroad (the Big Four).

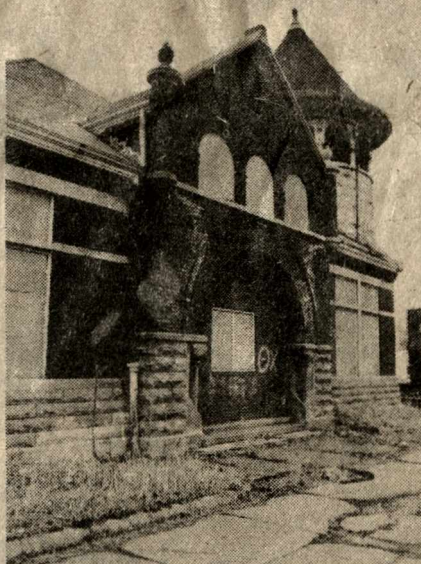
The unique design of architect C.J. Jacobs, it was constructed by Terre Haute contractor, August Ohm, and cost \$25,000.

In the years following the New York Central's formal leasing of Depression-ridden Big Four, in 1930, the station saw some of its most fruitful times.

People gathered to look at trains, buy a ticket to "St. Louie," greet the boys coming back from the "Big War," or pick-up an implement ordered from Montgomery Ward's Spring and Summer Catalogue.

Hucksters stuffed their wagons with turnips, tomatoes and greens; pots and pans; shoes and overalls; and the latest issues of "The Country

*Related stories,  
pictures, Page D1.*



Depot now subject  
for graffiti artists

Gentleman" and "Collier's."

Drummers with cases containing a gross of gadgets sat side by side on long wooden benches.

Aunt Mary in St. Paul would show neighbors her new great-nephew with a photograph secured in a letter in the mail car.

In the baggage room crates and trunks and grips formed pyramids as bustling baggagemen pulled large, green wagons with red, spoked wheels. The wagons formed their own crooked train as they lined the platform.

It has been nearly a quarter of a century since smoke from a standing locomotive soiled the depot's pointed tower.

Now trash litters the cracked concrete of the only building left.

Neglected since Sept. 29, 1979, when Amtrak's *National Limited* boarded passengers for the last run to Kansas City, it looms above the leveled earth and pavement as if waiting for an overdue passenger train.

It is a drab structure these days. Warped plywood sheaths windows spared by vandals. String-like weeds fight for space with dull-plumed pigeons in torn, rusty gutters. Broken glass cracks underfoot as you near padlocked doors.

Through a crack you can see peeling paint on the once elegant interior. Cobwebs anchor damp, gloomy walls...It is dark and still.

A five-chimed horn suddenly breaks the silence. Crossing signals alternate a red-black glow. Six thousand horsepower thunders—steel against steel—as a pair of SD locomotives muscle a 100-car freight through the curve and past the depot without yielding momentum ... Bright blue and white diesel locomotives ... Conrail? ... What happened to streamlined Hudson engines? ... Why are there no more Harriman coaches?

No one meets trains anymore; none stop. Engineers don't wave as growling diesels roar by. No pop or candy is sold, no timetables, no telegraph office, no Railway Express Agency ... Only a splintered loading dock supports weathered doors with a rusted lock.

The green gateman's tower across the tracks with red lanterns and pot-bellied stove has been replaced by silver-painted relay boxes. The ornate metal "TERRE HAUTE" sign has disappeared. Only mud puddles and rotting ties survive.

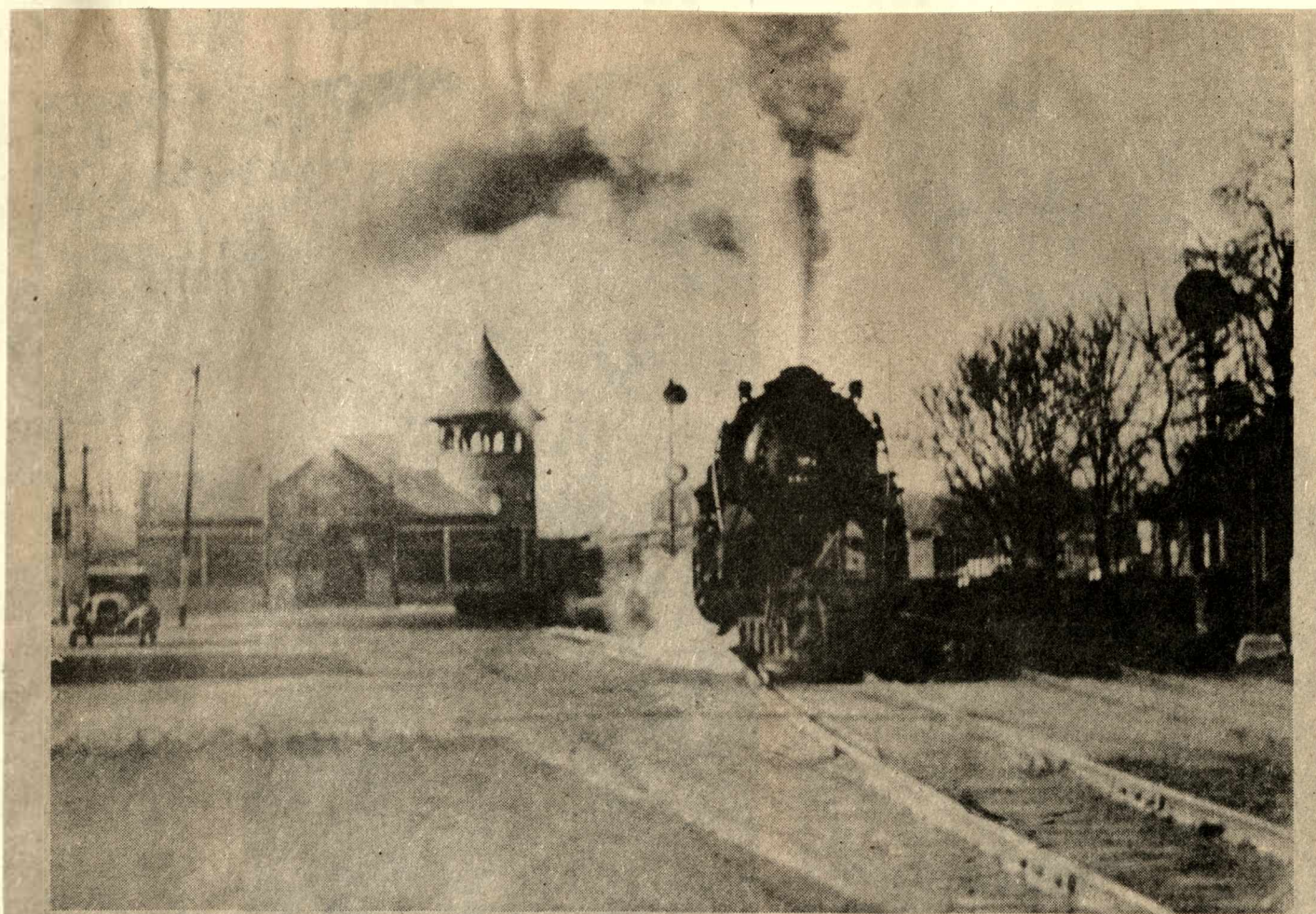
No horizontal semaphore blade stops the "Limited" — no mail goes today. No smiling porter awaits; his bags were stored when they took him to the retirement home.

Where do old train terminals go to die?

Arthritic and bowed, the proud edifice endures: a reminder that this was the lord manor of the mainline, a springboard for the wanderlust, a refuge for the weary wanderer.

Lonely and defaced it prevails amid parking lots ... the flat mausoleums of its vintage counterparts.





Scene from the past: Train puts out steam as it leaves Terre Haute depot.



# Abandoned Depot Draws

*Historic Landmark (TH) Railroad (TH)*

T JUN 23 1977

## Interest

By KAYE HOOLE  
Tribune Staff Writer

Visions of the Big Four train depot at 7th and Tippecanoe streets transformed into a restaurant, a nightclub or a discotheque has been the fascination of several local persons.

Four or five interested parties have contacted Conrail toward the purchase of the 78-year-old building. And, other local parties have speculated toward its development on the local level.

Preventing short-term realization of such fascinations is the fact the building won't be sold for three or four years, according to Mark Warwick, a Conrail real estate representative in the Ohio office. Warwick explained the building, and most of Conrail's anticipated transactions, are "hung up on all sides."

He said Conrail is operating under a federal program whereby it can only spend one per cent of its capital per year for three years or a maximum of three per cent over a three-year period. "If the board of trustees should want to use some money, it probably would be invested inside Conrail."

A second complication Warwick said, is all sales or transfers of the Big Four station must be cleared through Amtrak, which has a lease to use a portion of the building for waiting facilities for its passengers.

A third complication is when Penn Central Railroad went bankrupt, Conrail received the Big Four station because it was an operating parcel. If Conrail were "to now turn around and sell it," Warwick said, "Penn Central could prove it's non-operating (as a train facility) and then receive the proceeds. As of July 1, however, Penn Central can "no

longer make any moves," he said.

Although the near future doesn't seem to include a transformation of the local landmark, interest toward a quasi-restoration still exists.

"Quaint old buildings are really being successfully converted just about everywhere," Bert Williams Sr., a local real estate agent said. "The bad thing is Terre Haute is so small. If something really clicks, well you're in, if it doesn't — well, you fall flat on your fanny."

"To invest in something like the old depot," he said, "would be a monster of a deal, not a little animal."

Williams confirmed Warwick's statement that local interest had been expressed. "I can't say anyone's been really serious, it's just talk. They like the idea. You know—you drive by a building and see it, you hear about it, then you ask about it."

According to Warwick, however, "definite local interest has been expressed." At least some people have been interested enough to contact Conrail, he said.

One local businessman said he had done some investigating in an attempt to create a restaurant out of the station. He said the cost of the building and the "disinterest of Conrail" caused him to turn back on the deal.

The businessman said "figures were run in sort of an investigation." It was determined, however, the building would cost somewhere around \$800,000. And, to convert the building into a restaurant facility, according to his figures, would run just under \$1 million.

This particular local interest dissipated with the prohibitiveness of the suggested price tag.

Williams said it would be "too difficult" to try to estimate the possible selling value of such a building. He explained "it's old—it can't be replaced. Who can say the worth of the marble or the value of the antique windows."

In estimating other same-sized buildings in the city and including a rough appraisal of current selling value, Williams said he thought the building would sell for somewhere just under \$800,000 or \$900,000. Land on both sides—for possible parking—is included.

Interested in the conversion of the building into something "along the line of a discotheque," had been expressed

by Rose-Hulman student David Terkosky.

"I was mostly interested in finding someone else to invest in the building," he said. "Terre Haute is desperately in need of a place where college students can go and have some fun."

"I was just thinking in terms of adding some train lights and putting some paint on the walls. I think the building is fantastic. The atmosphere would be ideal."

"The location would be ideal and just off the top of my head, I think the whole thing would be a great success," he added.

Terkosky said he had no idea how

much would be required to finance such a project.

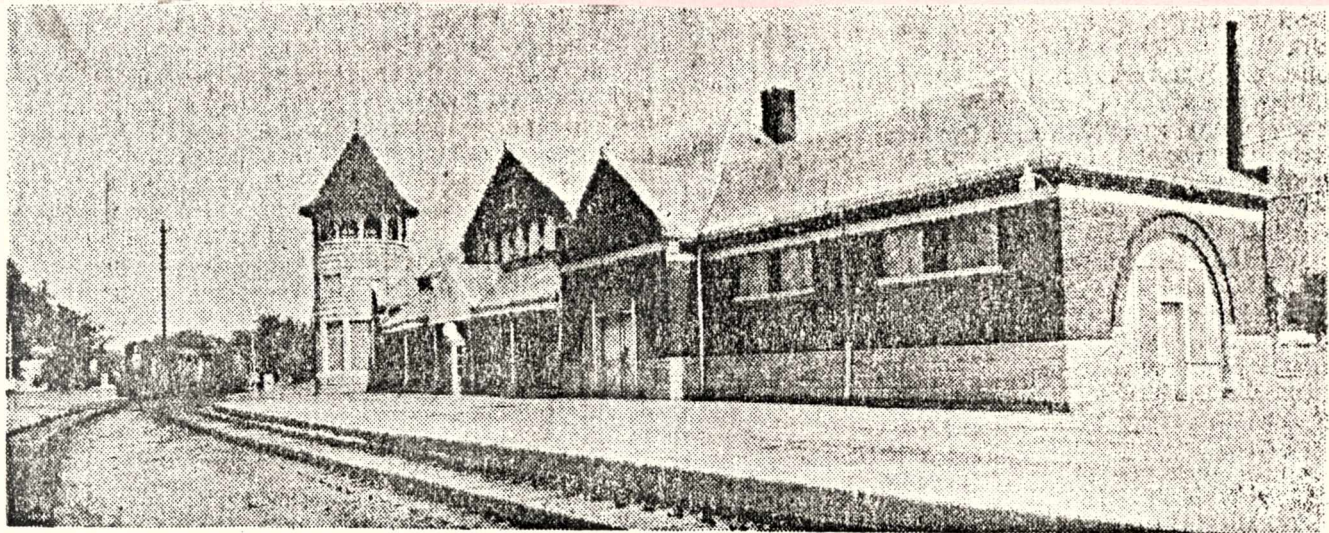
The building dates to 1897 when construction was begun and 1898 when the building was completed. The old Big Four Station is composed of sun baked bricks. Posts support the arched room, porticostyle.

The building is noted for its roof arches carved from Indiana limestone. More than 100 limestone castings of Grecian figures adorn the upper window. A Tiffany-leaded church glass window and several (at one time) stained-glass windows are features which give the depot its architecturally well-known reputation.

Vigo County Public Library

REFERENCE  
DO NOT CIRCULATE  
Community Affairs File





**BIG FOUR TRAIN DEPOT** — Much speculation has circulated recently concerning the possible conversion of the 78-year-old architecturally well-known building into a restaurant, a night-

club or a discotheque. A Conrail executive points out, however, the building will be tied in legal restraints for at least three or four years.

House of Photography Photo



T s JUN 28 1984

# The Big Four Depot and our heritage

Historic Landmarks (M.V.)

Community Affairs File

Events occur from time to time which force to the front of public attention this or that sleeping concept — and it has happened with the arguments, starting of demolition and then of litigation, surrounding the Big Four Depot. This concept happens to be our historical heritage pertaining to railroads and rail passenger service.

Some eight or nine years ago, another area heritage ceased to function, and there was some talk of making the Mt. Pleasant shaft coal mine a coal museum. This was merely discussed, because the safety factor in a shaft mine quickly subdued that thought.

At one time back 40 years or so, an offer was made to the city parks of a steam engine, to be displayed where convenient as a historical treasure and open to the public. True, the engine was a small switch

## Main Street



Richard Tuttle, who retired from The Tribune-Star in 1983, is a walking compendium of Terre Haute's history.

By Richard C. Tuttle  
Assistant Editor Emeritus

engine, but it was steam and that type of engine was rapidly being replaced with diesels. The park board turned down the offer, and the engine is now displayed in Evansville.

All historical sites, buildings and items cannot be preserved. Not even one of each can be saved — there isn't that much room or money

available. Some are being saved for future generations through the medium of photographs, movie film, microfilm. When a building can be used as a museum, restaurant or business, and retain its historical significance, then it should be saved. That is the position of the Big Four Depot.

REFERENCE  
DO NOT CIRCULATE

Vigo County Public Library



# Judge sets hearing date on Big 4's preservation

1 JUN 20 1984  
T JUN 30 1984

By Joe Baker  
Tribune-Star Staff Reporter

Whether Conrail will continue to be barred from swinging a wrecking ball into the old Big Four train depot at Seventh and Tippecanoe streets will be known July 9. Sullivan Circuit Judge George E. Taylor is scheduled to act on a motion to dissolve a temporary restraining order barring continued demolition that day.

Taylor said Friday he also will convene a pre-trial conference on a breach-of-contract claim by Jon Devereaux, 1329 N. Ninth St.

Devereaux contends that Consolidated Rail Corp. should live up to a contract both parties signed in August for Conrail to sell the 85-year-old depot to Devereaux.

Devereaux's attorney, Teri M. Lorenz, maintains that Devereaux and his wife Lisza "relied to their

detriment" on assurances that the sale would go through. Conrail officials told Devereaux on May 29 that the sale would not become final.

Devereaux said he was aware when the contract was signed in August that sale was subject to management approval, which was specified in the sales agreement.

Conrail attorney Jordan Lewis is using the subject-to-management-approval argument in seeking to dissolve a temporary restraining order established last week by Vigo Circuit Judge Robert H. Brown.

Devereaux is a local toy manufacturer who wants to expand operations into the old depot, putting 40 persons to work in 90 days and spending \$50,000 to \$100,000 for refurbishing the building's exterior.

Brown issued the restraining order at the same time he approved a change of venue on Lewis's contention that pretrial publicity

would hinder his client's chances of receiving a fair trial.

Sullivan Circuit Court was picked earlier this week for continuing litigation.

The Vigo Preservation Alliance has backed up Devereaux's claim to property with a \$10,000 property bond. The alliance is drumming up public support to keep the partially demolished structure intact as a final reminder of Terre Haute's railroading past.

In a news conference Friday, alliance president Gene Vaughn said more than 1,000 responses and a number of petitions have been received from mostly area persons wanting the depot preserved.

Letters will be sent to Conrail officials and Hoosier senators and representatives, making them aware of public support for preserving the depot, Vaughn added.

*Historic Landmarks (U.V.)*

REFERENCE  
DO NOT CIRCULATE



Big Four Depot

# Chalos urges Big 4's demise

By Patrick J. Barnes  
Tribune-Star Staff Reporter

Mayor P. Pete Chalos said Thursday that he has asked Consolidated Rail Corp. to tear down the Big Four train depot at Seventh and Tippecanoe streets, a move that will not be challenged by the Vigo County Preservation Alliance.

Alliance officials had gone to court two years ago to stop demolition.

Chalos said, "The decision will probably not be a popular one, but something has to happen."

Alliance spokesman Fred Nation said, "We're disappointed, but it's a reality."

Chalos said he made the decision because nothing has developed at the property for months.

Railroad officials have said they want the building torn down to accommodate a straightening of nearby tracks.

SEP 26 1986  
Alliance officials wanted the depot to remain and possibly renovated as a reminder of Terre Haute's railroading past.

Wrecking crews in June 1984 began tearing down the 85-year-old depot. Demolition was halted when Circuit Judge Robert H. Brown issued a temporary injunction.

The legal battle over demolition was moved to Sullivan Circuit Court, where the restraining order and temporary injunction were dissolved.

While the court battle lingered, the demolition permit which had been issued by the city expired.

Chalos intervened and refused the issuance of a second demolition permit for the depot.

The mayor said he wanted to give the railroad and Alliance an opportunity to try and work something out.

Chalos said Thursday that apparently nothing has or can be worked out between the Alliance and railroad.

Vigo County Public Library

Community Affairs File

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DO NOT CIRCULATE



*Historic Landmarks (HLN)*  
**Demolition is halted**  
*Community Affairs file*  
**as groups try to save**  
**Terre Haute depot**  
*Indpls. Star 6/12/84*

By SUSAN CRITTENDEN  
Star Special Correspondent

Terre Haute, Ind. — A court order has temporarily halted demolition of the Big Four Depot here as representatives of historic preservation groups meet today to determine if the building can be salvaged.

"We thought the building had been saved when Conrail sold it last year to the Devereauxs. They were just waiting to hear when the closing would be," said Gene Vaughn, president of the Vigo Preservation Alliance.

The alliance teamed with Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana on Saturday to serve as bonding agent for Jon and Lisze Devereaux, so they could obtain a temporary restraining order to stop demolition of the station.

"WE DID this in their behalf because they are the only ones with a legal claim that can stop the demolition and we thought it was important to save the building," Vaughn said.

However, while the judge was issuing the ban late Saturday, the wrecking crew started its bulldozer and demolished a portion of the depot. "They only worked about 35 minutes before quitting for the day, and they knew we were getting the order," an unhappy Vaughn added.

Devereaux and his wife purchased the property from Conrail in

August 1983 for an undisclosed sum, after several higher bidders withdrew their purchase proposals. They gave the railroad company a \$2,500 down payment, which has not been returned, said Mrs. Devereaux.

THE COUPLE intended to move their toy manufacturing business, Old Tyme Toys, into the former train station.

A Conrail spokesman said the company would not comment on the matter because it is in court. But the firm decided to tear the building down instead of selling it because it would be in the path of a plan that provides for straightening out a curve in the tracks nearby, according to several reports.

The former station, which may be 100 years old, was in excellent condition and had all qualifications necessary for placement on the national historic register, according to Vaughn. However, since the inside of the depot was gutted last week and the former baggage area was wrecked Saturday, he said he will meet with others to consider the next step.

Mrs. Devereaux no longer believes she and her husband can use the depot that was closed seven years ago.

"There is no way we can get it now; there is too much red tape. Our only interest at this point is in saving it for the people of Terre Haute," she said.

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Community Affairs File

Vigo County Public Library



# Judge mulls over depot injunction

1 SEP 8 1984

Greene Circuit Judge David K. Johnson is still considering whether to reinstate a preliminary injunction barring continued demolition of the Big Four Depot, a court spokesman said Friday.

The spokesman gave no indication when Johnson might rule on a motion for an injunction sought by toy manufacturer Jon Devereaux, 1329 N. Ninth St., who wants to set up shop in the historic building, closed in the early 1970s.

Devereaux's 9-month-old attempt to buy the property from Consolidated Rail Corp. ended in May when Conrail officials decided to knock down the building instead

of follow through on a sales agreement.

Mayor P. Pete Chalos has kept a city demolition permit on hold since July 13, creating the only impediment keeping Conrail from continuing demolition that was halted by Vigo Circuit Judge Robert H. Brown in June.

Devereaux's attorney, Teri M. Lorenz, said a decision by Johnson to refuse the injunction apparently would clear the way for Conrail to continue demolition. Both Conrail and Devereaux have exhausted their requests for venue changes.

Conrail was granted a change

from Vigo to Sullivan counties on a contention that publicity would impede fair proceedings. Subsequently, Sullivan Circuit Judge George E. Taylor dissolved an injunction, but granted Devereaux a change to Greene County.

"I assume Conrail would have the right to tear down the building," Lorenz said, adding that Devereaux will have to decide if he wants to pursue unspecified damages in the case on a claim of breach-of-contract.

Lorenz said she expected a letter informing her of Johnson's action on the motion for injunction.

Community Affairs File

Vigo County Public Library

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DO NOT CIRCULATE



# Conrail to raze Big Four

T 5 MAY 25 1984

Conrail's decision to demolish the old Big Four train depot at Seventh and Tippecanoe streets has dashed hopes of a local toy manufacturer to set up shop there.

A Conrail spokesman in Philadelphia said Thursday that the depot will be demolished to make room for an eventual straightening of a curve in nearby tracks.

"Leaving the depot in place prevents Conrail from easing the curb should the railroad choose to do so," the spokesman said. He added that Conrail will at some time straighten the curb, but he gave no indication when work might proceed.

Conrail's announcement ends a 10-month wait for John and Lisza Devereaux, 1327 N. Ninth St., who say they have a sales contract with Conrail, signed last August, for purchasing the nearly 100-year-old depot.

The Conrail spokesman said he was not authorized to make any other comment about the property other than to say that demolition of the property is in the offing.

Devereaux said he intended to expand a toy-manufacturing operation he operates out of his home into the depot. He added he had contracts to sell his wares to justify putting 40 persons to work. He could not be reached for reaction on Conrail's decision to demolish.

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Community Affairs File



SEP 12 1984  
Community Affairs File

# Big 4 case remains on hold: Nation

Historic Landmarks (U.U.)

An update of the status on the Big Four Depot court case pending in Greene Circuit Court contained nothing new, members of the Farrington's Grove Association learned Tuesday night.

The update was part of a program presented by Vigo Preservation Alliance Inc.

Greene Circuit Judge David K. Johnson has the case under advisement. Johnson either will grant a restraining order and set a new trial date or dismiss the case, said Fred Nation, alliance secretary-treasurer.

There is no indication when Johnson might rule on the injunction sought by local toy manufacturer Jon Devereaux, 1329 N. Ninth St., who wants to set up shop in the historic building at 700 N. Seventh St.

Mayor P. Pete Chalos refused last month to give Consolidated Rail Corp. a new permit to demolish the depot. A refusal by the judge to grant the injunction apparently would allow Conrail to continue demolition, Devereaux's attorney, Teri M. Lorenz, has said.

Devereaux's attempt to buy the depot from Conrail ended in May when Conrail officials opted to begin demolishing the building instead of consummating its sales agreement with Devereaux.

Conrail officials maintain they want to demolish the structure built in 1898 to accommodate straightening of nearby tracks.

Alliance member Alden Taylor said Tuesday night that tracks recently upgraded in front of the depot to 6½ Street and now being upgraded from 6½ Street to the west would have to be torn out if the curve were straightened.

The upgrading of tracks is being done here to Indianapolis and on to East St. Louis, Taylor said.

The alliance contacted an engineering firm in Evansville to survey trackage and determine if Conrail would need to straighten the curve.

"The firm says straightening the tracks will have no meaningful benefit to Conrail," Nation said.

That information is being forwarded to Rep. John Myers, R-Ind., and Sens. Richard Lugar and Dan Quayle as ammunition in persuading Conrail not to demolish the depot should Conrail win the suit.

Alliance president Gene Vaughn said he receives telephone calls from the congressmen's offices about three times a week. The alliance urged continued public pressure on Myers, Lugar and Quayle on the depot's behalf.

Community Affairs File

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Vigo County Public Library



# Big Four rolls back into court again today

*Historic Landmarks (W.D.)*

Ts JUL 9 1984

A motion to lift a restraining order, allowing demolition to proceed on the Big Four Depot, Seventh and Tippecanoe streets, gets action in Sullivan Circuit Court today.

Circuit Court Judge George E. Taylor is to act on the motion filed by Conrail attorney Jordan Lewis during a 1:30 p.m. hearing.

Lewis contends an agreement for

purchase of the 85-year-old depot hinged on Conrail management approval — a condition spelled out in the agreement.

Jon Devereaux, 1329 N. Ninth St., claiming breach-of-contract, has indicated he was aware of the condition when he signed the agreement in August. Not until May 29 did Conrail officials tell Devereaux that

sale would not become final.

Devereaux' attorney, Teri M. Lorenz, has used the time lapse, in part, to demonstrate that Devereaux and his wife Lisza had received some assurance a sale would be forthcoming.

A pre-trial conference centering on the breach-of-contract claim is scheduled as a companion action to

Community Affairs File

Lewis bid to dissolve a temporary restraining order.

Vigo Circuit Judge Robert H. Brown granted the temporary restraining order in June, the same time he venued the case out of Vigo and into Sullivan County. Lewis, who sought the change, contended pre-trial publicity was hindering Conrail's chance of getting a fair trial.

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Thursday next stop

Community Affairs File

T s JUL 1 1 1984

## Depot's fate remains unsettled

SULLIVAN — The fate of the Big Four depot in Terre Haute remains in limbo. Sullivan Circuit Judge George E. Taylor has taken under advisement a motion to dissolve a temporary restraining order and to allow demolition to proceed.

After the 1½-hour hearing Monday, both sides were asked to submit by Thursday papers on findings of fact and conclusions of law pertaining to the case. No date was set by Taylor to render his judgment on the temporary restraining order issued in June by Vigo Circuit Judge Robert H. Brown, according to Conrail

attorney Jordan Lewis.

Attorney Teri Lorenz said some of Taylor's comments indicated he would dissolve the preliminary injunction when papers were filed Thursday. She represents prospective Big Four buyer Jon Devereaux, 1329 N. Ninth St., who is claiming breach of contract on Conrail's part regarding the sale of the station.

Lewis filed a motion Monday on Conrail's behalf to dismiss Devereaux's amended complaint concerning the alleged breach. Taylor said no date has been set to hear that

complaint.

Taylor said another motion was filed Monday on Devereaux's behalf to show he refuses to accept the refund on his down payment. The motion would deposit Conrail's \$2,500 refund with the Sullivan court.

Vigo Preservation Alliance President Gene Vaughn said that Sen. Dan Quayle, R-Ind., had been in contact with Conrail regarding to situation and promised to let Vaughn know the railroad company's response.

The group will meet Wednesday to discuss further steps.

Vigo County Public Library

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Community Affairs File



*Historic Landmarks (W.V.)*

# Big 4 wrecking permit expires

*Community Affairs File*

Ts JUL 13 1984

By Dick Robinson  
*Tribune-Star Staff Reporter*

While demolition of the Big Four railroad depot in Terre Haute remains tangled in a maze of legal work awaiting a judge's decision, the wrecking permit has expired.

Thursday was the deadline for both sides in the dispute over demolishing the old building to submit written arguments to Sullivan Circuit Judge George Taylor. The judge has taken under advisement a request to set aside the

restraining order which halted demolition.

Sen. Richard Lugar, R-Ind., sent a letter Thursday to Conrail, owner of the depot, asking that it not move forward with demolition. In his letter, Lugar asked Conrail not to proceed until it is "completely and clearly determined" if there is a qualified buyer for the property.

Terre Haute Mayor Pete Chalos said Thursday it would take 30 days to secure another wrecking permit. There was no request for a new permit on file Thursday.

While there might be considerable

local interest to preserve the old depot, Chalos questions if the money is available to do something with the property. "What is needed is someone with enough resources to put it into proper condition and not let it set vacant for another 20 years," he said.

Taylor has not set dates to rule on the temporary restraining order that stopped demolition or a complaint by Jon Devereaux, Terre Haute, who charges Conrail with breach of contract over the purchase of the depot.

Vigo County Public Library

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Community Affairs File



# No impediments bar Conrail despite mounting sentiment

1 s JUL 20 1984

Historic landmarks (w.v.)

Community Affairs File

As political and public sentiment mounts for sparing the Big Four depot here, no legal obstacles remain to prevent Consolidated Rail Corp. from continuing demolition of the 85-year-old structure.

The only obstacle barring demolition had been a preliminary injunction dissolved in Sullivan Circuit Court last week.

Circuit Judge George E. Taylor approved Conrail attorney Jordan Lewis' motion to dissolve the injunction, but also approved a change of venue for a breach-of-contract case to continue in either Knox, Greene or Clay counties.

Local attorney Teri M. Lorenz sought the venue change for pressing a contention by Jon Devereaux, 1329 N. Ninth St., that a proposed sales contract from Conrail was binding for buying the depot.

Devereaux and Conrail officials signed the contract in August, but Devereaux was not informed until late May that Conrail management rejected the proposed sale.

Devereaux, a local toy manufacturer who wants to set up shop in

the depot, has indicated he signed the contract aware of a written stipulation that a sale was subject to management approval.

In addition, Lorenz filed a petition with the Indiana Supreme Court, seeking assurance that Taylor had jurisdiction in approving the venue change. No date has been set for the high court to rule on that petition.

Both Lorenz and Lewis acknowledge that no legal impediments stand in the way of Conrail demolishing the final reminder of Terre Haute's railroading past.

But spokespersons for both the City Building Inspection office and S&G Excavating Co., 505 Margaret Ave., say Conrail has made no recent overtures for continuing demolition.

Conrail would need a demolition permit from the inspection office; S&G was contracted by Conrail to demolish the structure.

A Philadelphia spokesperson for Conrail, unaware the restraining order had been dissolved, could not offer a comment on whether Conrail would renew demolition ef-

forts.

Meanwhile, U.S. Sen. Richard Lugar, R-Ind., joined U.S. Rep. John Myers, R-Ind., and Sen. Dan Quayle, R-Ind., Thursday in supporting Vigo Preservation Alliance's plea to save the depot.

"I hope you will not forget the public role that Congress expects Conrail to play while it is a government-owned corporation," Lugar said in a July 12 letter to Conrail chief officer L. Stanley Crane.

Alliance official Fred Nation said he received a copy of Lugar's letter Thursday.

Quayle's letter, received by the alliance last week, urged Crane to reconsider demolishing the depot, Nation said, adding that Myers' office has been most active in supporting preservation efforts.

All the Hoosier legislators say they have received "quite a bit" of mail in support of depot preservation, Nation said. The alliance has received 3,000 names of persons saying they, too, want the depot saved, he added.

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# Big 4 dispute moving to Greene

JUL 27 1984

Historic Landmarks (WV)

By Kathy Gurchiek

Tribune-Star Staff Reporter

A Greene County court will decide the legal battle between Consolidated Rail Corp. and local entrepreneurs Jon and Lisza Devereaux, 1329 N. Ninth St. over Terre Haute's Big Four Depot.

Announcement of the decision came Thursday night during the meeting of the Vigo Preservation Alliance at the YWCA.

A preliminary injunction barring demolition of the depot was dissolved in Sullivan Circuit Court last week. Conrail's demolition

permit has since expired and another permit applied for July 13.

The city will not grant the permit for another month. Alliance secretary-treasurer Fred Nation said Thursday night, citing Mayor P. Pete Chalos. The city's delay is to give those opposing the demolition time to regroup, Nation said.

"I'm not going to give up hope," Devereaux said after the meeting. "I think we can win this. Now that we've got political support, I think it'll help a lot."

Political support has come from Chalos, Sen. Richard Lugar, R-Ind., Rep. John Myers, R-Ind., and Sen. Dan Quayle, R-Ind.

An overwhelmingly positive community response toward the Devereauxs has caused them to disconnect their telephone after receiving 20 to 30 calls daily. The calls began pouring in after the public learned of the demolition which started June 9.

Devereaux and Conrail officials signed the contract in August, which stipulated the sale was subject to the approval of Conrail management. The local toy manufacturer wants to set up shop in the 85-year-old structure.

He was not informed until late May that Conrail management rejected the proposed sale.

Vigo County Public Library

DO NOT CIRCULATE

Community Affairs File



# Four Depot

Community Affairs File

## City goes to bat once more for Big

Ts JUL 28 1984

By Joe Baker  
Tribune-Star Staff Reporter

Consolidated Rail Corp. won't be issued a permit to demolish the Big Four Depot "until all avenues have been exhausted" for saving the local landmark, Mayor P. Pete Chalos said Friday.

"We're not going to give it to them until we've communicated with the alliance and Conrail to see if we can work something out," Chalos said.

The mayor said he told Conrail regional officials in Cincinnati on Thursday that

Conrail's permit application, filed July 13, has been delayed. He added he would be corresponding with officials in the company's headquarters in Philadelphia, but first he intended to talk with Vigo Preservation Alliance officials.

Alliance officials have indicated they have a line on a group of potential investors expressing interest in the property.

In addition, the Indianapolis-based Historical Landmarks Foundation of Indiana has offered to buy the depot in order to sell it for preservation, Fred Nation, alliance secretary-treasurer, said.

"When you're dealing with a business

proposition, you'll have to see dollars and cents — not good intentions," Chalos said.

Chalos said Conrail's response to Thursday's discussion was a restatement of its previous position to knock down the depot to make way for a straightening of nearby tracks — some of which are reported to have been replaced with new tracks over the last six months.

No mention was made regarding whether Conrail would entertain another offer for buying the property, Chalos said.

Intervention into the depot-demolition fray marks the second time the city has gone to bat to save the 87-year-old final

reminder of Terre Haute's railroading past.

City intervention last year led to an auctioning of the property to toy manufacturer Jon Devereaux, 1329 N. Ninth St., who has been waging a legal fight since June to purchase the property.

Greene County has become the third courtroom site for pressing Devereaux's claim, contending a proposed sales contract signed in August gives him title.

Conrail attorney Jordan Lewis maintains a contract provision, stipulating the sale depended on management approval, dissolves any claim Devereaux has to the property. Sale was rejected in late May.

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DO NOT CIRCULATE



and sometimes give them a sweet and in the same tone of voice that he said 'I'm Uncle Menzele' he would tell the officials to give them a lethal injection," Weiss said.

"So when he approached my sister, I threw myself on him. I had enough sense to know that it was dangerous but he happened to be in a good mood and it didn't matter to him if he killed Eva Weiss or whether he killed the next person, so she survived."

**S Vioxx**

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Source:  
CNN/Money

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# WABASH VALLEY

*A series of tributes to hometown heroes who have made a difference.*

*Historic  
Landmarks (all)*

## The Big Four Depot

**A**fter serving the community for nearly nine decades, the Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago & St. Louis Railway depot at Seventh and Tippecanoe streets was demolished in 1986, much to preservationists' regret.

The Big Four Depot, as it was popularly known, was officially dedicated on July 27, 1899, amid considerable pomp and circumstance. A dozen railroad executives and



several hundred guests attended an evening program consecrating the facility. Col. William E. McLean, perhaps Terre Haute's finest living orator, was the featured speaker. An extensive program was presented by the Ringgold Orchestra. Musical selections included "On the Banks of the Wabash Far Away," dedicated by local composer Paul Dresser to Mary South, daughter of Ellis E. South, the Big Four's

general agent in Terre Haute. The Big Four's *Knickerbocker Special* from St. Louis to New York, which stopped at Terre Haute, was considered one of the finest trains in the world.

The city was pleased to have a handsome passenger station to supplant "The Little Old Yellow Box," a description applied to the first Big Four depot, a one-room facility built in about 1874 at Sixth and Tippecanoe streets by the Indianapolis & St. Louis Railroad, one of the railroads that consolidated in 1889 to become "The Big Four." Though not as elaborate as Union Depot, dedicated in 1893 by William Riley McKeen's Terre Haute & Indianapolis Railroad, the new Big Four depot was very elegant. Besides, the former depot conjured up memories of the relocation of the Indianapolis & St. Louis Railroad repair shops from Terre Haute to Mattoon, Ill. The Great Northern Hotel—located one block immediately south—opened a few weeks after the Big Four depot was dedicated.

On July 4, 1870, the Indianapolis & St. Louis Railroad completed its right-of-way between Terre Haute and Indianapolis, nearly paralleling the Terre Haute & Indianapolis Railroad right-of-way. It maintained a freight depot at Fourth and Tippecanoe streets.

The "Big Four" became part of the New York Central System in 1930. After a merger of the New York Central and the Pennsylvania Railroad in 1968, the depot served the Penn Central Railroad. Conrail acquired the assets of insolvent Penn Central in 1976.

In the fall of 1979, the National Limited, a passenger train from New York City to Kansas City that used the Big Four track between Indianapolis and Terre Haute, was suspended during what was called the "Carter Railroad Bloodbath," terminating the depot's usefulness as a rail facility. Conrail demolished a wall in 1984 but court action by the Vigo County Preservation Alliance postponed the ultimate razing until early December 1986.



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*Terre Haute Tribune - 8th Thursday Jan 27, 2005 p. A5*



# Injunction saves Big Four depot from more wrecking-ball damage

T: JUN 21 1984

By Joe Baker  
Tribune-Star Staff Reporter

A preliminary injunction was granted Wednesday, temporarily sparing the Big Four train depot at Seventh and Tippecanoe streets from further demolition.

The 85-year-old depot, closed in the early 1970s, was partially torn down June 9 before Vigo Circuit Judge Robert H. Brown granted a 10-day restraining order halting demolition.

Brown granted the injunction following a two-hour hearing Wednesday, apparently siding with attorney Terri M. Lorenz' legal contention that a public interest exists in preserving the depot.

Lorenz is attorney for Jon Devereaux, 1329 N. Ninth St., who signed a contract with Consolidated Rail Corp. on Aug. 31 to buy the depot — subject to approval of Conrail management. Conrail officials told Devereaux on May 24 that the sale would not become finalized.

Conrail attorney Jordan Lewis used the subject-to-management-approval stipulation as a basis for asking Brown to dissolve the restraining order that was due to expire Friday.

Brown denied Lewis' request.

Brown also approved a change of venue in the case, allowing Lewis to reject either Parke, Clay, Sullivan and Vermillion counties as prospective hearing sites. Lewis struck Vermillion County, while Lorenz has yet to decide which county she intends to strike.

Lewis said recent publicity prompted his request for a change of venue.

"With all the publicity, we [Conrail] felt like we were a criminal. We felt like we'd have a better chance in another county," Lewis said.

Publicity has centered on local preservationists' claim that the structure has historical significance.

Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana officials who toured the property last week said the building

is valuable because of its association with the Big Four Railroads.

"Conrail is going to know we're not going to lay down and play dead on this one," William Strecker, a Vigo County Preservation Alliance board member, said Wednesday at the depot site.

Strecker and another board member, Anita Wells Taylor, displayed letters, purporting to represent 600 persons who want the structure preserved.

The alliance's only involvement thus far in the depot fray has been to post a \$10,000 bond on behalf of Devereaux' breach-of-contract suit against Conrail.

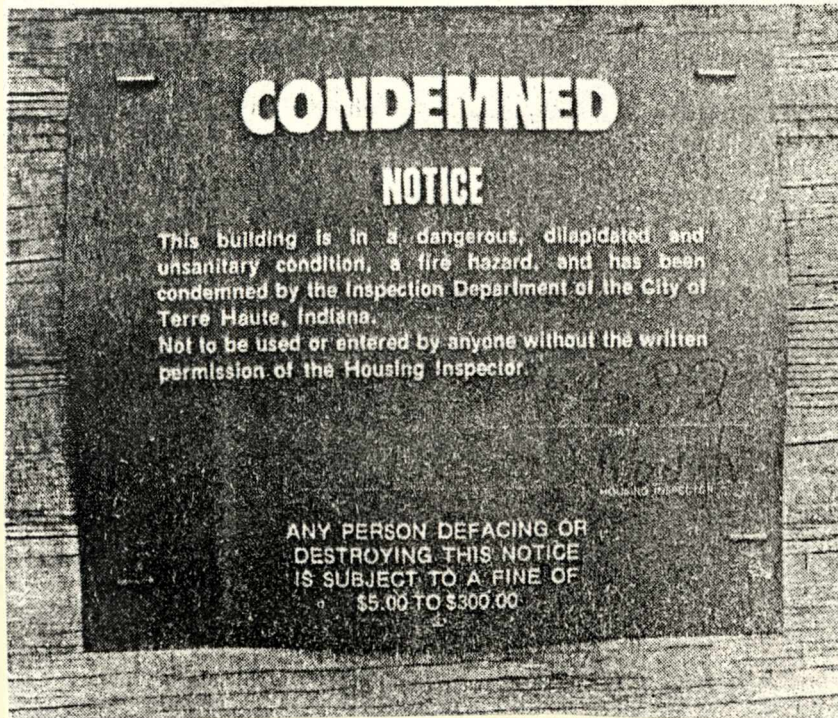
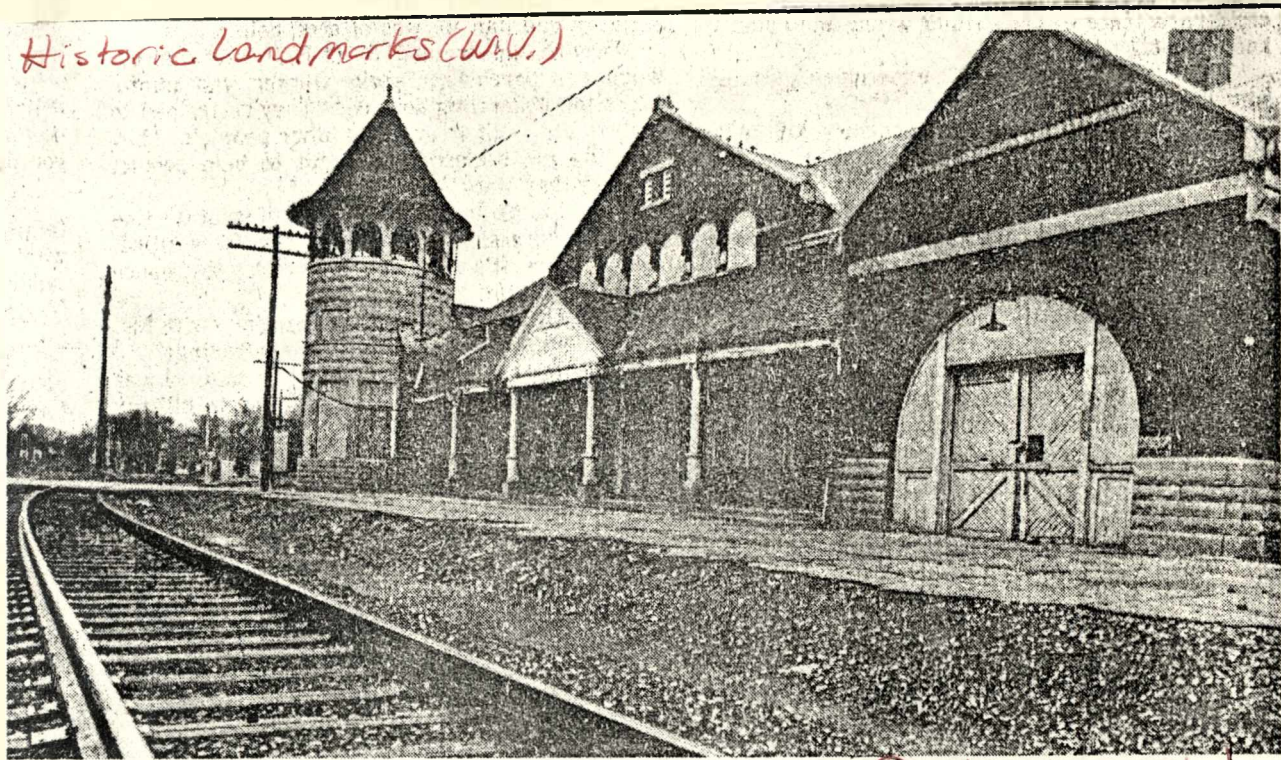
But Strecker and Taylor said three unnamed groups, who they say have financial backing, are interested in purchasing the property if the Devereaux-Conrail deals falls through.

Lewis said he is uncertain whether Conrail would entertain any other offers for the property and Conrail officials in Philadelphia say they will not comment on pending litigation.

REFERENCE  
DO NOT CIRCULATE



Historic landmarks (W.V.)



Railroads (T.H.)  
T JAN 24 1983

## End of era

Terre Haute's last remaining railroad station, located by the Conrail tracks in the 500 block of North Seventh Street, may not remain much longer. "This building is in a dangerous, dilapidated and unsanitary condition, a fire hazard, and has been condemned..." reads a notice tacked on the east door of the station Jan. 4. Unless whoever owns the building can prove otherwise, it's the wrecking ball for the station.

Staff Photos/Bill Williams

Vigo County Public Library

REFERENCE  
DO NOT CIRCULATE

Community Affairs File



S JAN 28 1981

# The Big Four depot should be saved

*Railroads (U.S.) Historic Landmarks (U.S.)*

By Richard C. Tuttle

Demolition of the old Big Four depot would follow the pattern in Terre Haute — tear down and leave an empty lot — or throw away and lose a bit of history.

Many towns in the area, and elsewhere, have utilized unused railroad depots for a variety of purposes. Chattanooga, Tennessee was able to interest the Sheraton Hotel chain to take over the Southern Railroad passenger station, and make it into a most unusual motel, complete with large dining facilities, shops, a skating rink and street car line. It's known as "Chattanooga Choo-Choo" and is widely known, and a great place to visit.

Nearer home, some of the smaller communities in the area have made museums and restaurants of old stations.

Indianapolis is making a gigantic shopping mall of the old station. St. Louis has a similar project.

The station here is not too big for a restaurant, and part of it might be utilized by area model railroaders to set up a model railroad system. It should be made available, and surely

is not too deteriorated to be repaired.

It is good to hear some Indiana State University students are interested and are studying the building and its possible renovation and use. The depot should not be allowed to go the way of other historic structures in Terre Haute.

REFERENCE  
DO NOT CHECK OUT

Vigo County Public Library



T MAR 2 1983

# Big Four may have new lease on life

*Railroads*  
*Historic Landmarks (T.H.)*  
*Historic Landmarks (W.)*

By DONNA CHRISTENBERRY  
Staff Writer

The Big Four railroad station on north Seventh Street perked up at the possibility of a new lease on life Tuesday. Approximately 50 interested persons, including potential investors, were invited by Conrail to tour the station's interior and ask questions.

A positive tone pervaded the dank interior of the structure.

"Conrail is interested in doing something constructive," said Michael Barnes of the Terre Haute Department of Redevelopment.

The company would like to sell in the near future. According to reports, Conrail officials soon will set a minimum price and invite interested parties to bid. Bids are tentatively scheduled to be opened March 15 in the Cincinnati real estate offices of Conrail.

Papers concerning the bidding process and any restrictions on the purchaser, such as erecting a fence between the station and the tracks,

will be sent only to those who attended Tuesday's meeting and signed a sheet indicating they wanted to buy.

Any proposed sale must be approved by officials at Conrail's headquarters in Philadelphia.

The city's role in directing investors to Conrail is over, said Barnes.

"It's now up to the private sector and Conrail." However, Barnes said, tax abatements and industrial bonds could be made available to help investors renovate the structure and start a business.

What kind of business? The restaurant idea keeps popping up, whether as part of a chain or as a unique local eatery.

Some Indiana State University students also are continuing their study on the feasibility of turning the station into an art gallery where area artists could display and sell their works.

A railroad museum has been mentioned also.

Wayne County Public Library

DO NOT CIRCULATE

Community Affairs File



# Date for depot may be set

Historic Landmarks (H.L.) Community Affairs File

By Joe Baker

AUG 4 1984

Tribune-Star Staff Reporter

A hearing may be set next week in the twice-venued case to spare the partially-wrecked Big Four Depot.

Greene Circuit Judge David K. Johnson is to set a date for a hearing for Jon Devereaux, 1329 N. Ninth St., who claims to have a binding contract to buy the 87-year-old old depot.

Consolidated Rail Corp. signed a sales contract with Devereaux nearly a year ago, but informed Devereaux in late May that the sale would not be finalized. The contract specified that sale was subject to approval of Conrail management.

Conrail said it wants to demolish

the structure to straighten nearby tracks.

The only legal restraint prohibiting continued demolition was removed last week when Sullivan Circuit Judge George E. Taylor dissolved a preliminary injunction. In addition, Taylor venued Devereaux's claim-of-ownership case to Greene.

The injunction Taylor dissolved had been set by Vigo Circuit Judge Robert H. Brown, whose 11th-hour restraining order halted demolition of the depot June 9.

The only thing saving the depot now is Mayor P. Pete Chalos's refusal to allow Conrail another demolition permit until all avenues have been exhausted for sparing the structure. Conrail applied for a permit July 13.

Chalos gave the Vigo Preserva-

tion Alliance, buoyed by support of Hoosier legislators in Congress, 30 days from mid-July to seek other buyers for the depot.

The alliance has been assured by both Devereaux and the Indianapolis-based Historical Landmarks Foundation of Indiana that they would buy the \$25,000 depot and make it available for resale, alliance Secretary-Treasurer Fred Nation said Friday.

Conrail officials, in telephone conversations last week and early this week with Chalos, neither refused nor agreed to meet with alliance representatives and Chalos about saving the depot, Nation said.

Philadelphia-based Conrail officials have steadfastly declined comment on the situation.



# City denies new Big 4 Depot demolition permit

IT: AUG 18 1984

The city has refused to give Consolidated Rail Corp. a new permit to demolish the Big Four Depot, 700 S. Seventh St., Mayor P. Pete Chalos confirmed Friday.

Conrail's first demolition permit expired and rail officials applied for another July 13.

Chalos said Friday he denied the permit because the dispute over ownership of the property remains in court and he wants to give the

Vigo Preservation Alliance time to find a buyer for the historic property.

The alliance has four potential buyers for the property, alliance president Gene Vaughn said Friday. He would not elaborate.

"We're not going to give it to them," Chalos said in July, "until we've communicated with the alliance and Conrail to see if we can work something out."

Several days before Conrail re-applied for the permit, a preliminary injunction was dissolved in Sullivan Circuit Court removing the only legal restraint to demolition.

Their permit application filed July 13 had been delayed, Chalos told Conrail regional officials in Cincinnati last month. S&G Excavating, who had demolished part of the depot, filed the application.

The contract signed by toy manufacturer Jon Devereaux, 1329 N. Ninth St., was rejected by Conrail in May. Dispute over ownership has led to a hearing scheduled for Thursday in Greene Circuit Court.

The city has intervened before in attempting to save the 86-year-old reminder of Terre Haute's railroad heritage. Intervention last year led to an auction and Devereaux's

subsequent purchase of the property.

Devereaux's contract with Conrail was subject to management approval, but the Devereauxs claim they relied on assurances from Conrail that the deal would go through.

Conrail officials have said they intend to demolish the structure to accommodate straightening of nearby tracks.

Community Affairs File

REFERENCE  
DO NOT CIRCULATE

Vigo County Public Library



SEP 14 1984

# Conrail wins major round

*Historic Landmarks*  
A motion to bar continued demolition of the Big Four Depot, Seventh and Tippecanoe streets, was denied Thursday in Greene Circuit Court.

Judge David K. Johnson denied a preliminary injunction sought by Jon Devereaux, 1329 N. Ninth St., who had been trying to buy the depot from Consolidated Rail Corp., Philadelphia.

Johnson cited a proposed sales contract between Devereaux and Conrail, signed by both parties in August 1983, that stipulated the sale was subject to management approval. Conrail told Devereaux in May that approval would not be granted.

*Community Affairs File (WV)*  
Johnson found that Devereaux was aware during the nine-month wait for possible approval that a sale may have been or may not have been forthcoming.

Along with rejecting the sale in May, Conrail told Devereaux that the depot would be demolished to allow for a straightening of nearby tracks.

Vigo Preservation Alliance, which has been mounting public support for depot preservation, is awaiting results from an Evansville engineer on whether straightening of tracks is essential — especially since the tracks that would be moved have been replaced

with new tracks in recent months.

Alliance Secretary Fred Nation on Thursday conceded, "We have no leverage [in the situation] except we're not sure if the Conrail officials really know what's going on."

Only Mayor P. Pete Chalos' refusal to issue another demolition permit is keeping Conrail from knocking down the building. Chalos was unavailable for comment on whether he intended to issue the permit.

Conrail officials in Philadelphia were assessing Johnson's ruling Thursday. Response to the court action is expected today.

Community Affairs File

REFERENCE  
DO NOT CIRCULATE

Vigo County Public Library



Community Affairs File

Historic Landmarks (WV, V)

# Group hopes to halt demolition

† JUN 13 1984

By Joe Baker  
Tribune-Star Staff Reporter

Local preservationists are pressing an 11th-hour attempt to save one of the remaining visages of Terre Haute's railroading past, the Big 4 Railroad Depot at Seventh and Tippecanoe streets.

The Vigo Preservation Alliance received an assessment of the 85-year-old structure Tuesday, while an attorney for a local toy manufacturer contends Consolidated Rail Corp. is bound by a contract to sell the property.

Meanwhile, a temporary restraining order, issued Saturday by Vigo Circuit Judge Robert H. Brown, remains in effect.

The order was issued at the urging of toy manufacturer Jon Devereaux, 1329 N. Ninth St., but only after the

structure was about one-fifth demolished.

Devereaux signed a contract with Conrail on Aug. 31, 1983, stipulating a sale was subject to the approval of the management of Conrail.

Terri M. Lorenz, who is Devereaux' attorney, contended Tuesday that Conrail "lied to their detriment" in giving assurance to Devereaux throughout the nine-month wait for ownership that a sale would become final.

Those assurances, coupled with a \$2,500 downpayment on the \$25,000 structure, are a sufficient bases for claiming ownership, Lorenz maintained.

Conrail officials in Philadelphia declined comment on the pending litigation, but Lorenz quoted Conrail attorney F.P. Clifford as saying that property ownership is clouded.

Conrail has a 99-year, renewable lease on the property with Sophie

Wheeler, dating to 1898, and Clifford is in the throes of tracking down lease payments to determine ownership, Lorenz quoted Clifford as saying.

As legal wrangling ensues, preservation fervor mounts on behalf of the Devereaux' purchase of the property.

Devereaux' wife, Lisza, said the balance of the \$25,000 asking price for the depot is on deposit in a local bank. She added that, "if that's what it takes," more than \$100,000 would be invested in the property to preserve it.

Alliance President Gene Vaughn questioned the nine-month delay in selling the property and subsequent, rapid-fire issuance of a city demolition permit and ensuing demolition.

But a spokesman for S&G Excavating Co., 505 Margaret Ave., contracted to demolish the property,

denied demolition began Saturday to avoid a then-impending injunction barring demolition.

"Demolition certainly wasn't done with the intention of beating an injunction," William Brush said.

Despite Alliance claims to the contrary, Brush added that demolition had never been scheduled for Monday.

"Nothing came from this office that demolition was to start Monday," Brush said.

Officials for Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana, who were here Tuesday, said the building is valuable because of its historic association with the Big 4 Railroads.

Thomas M. Slade, foundation director, said the structure's architecture is vintage Romanesque, characterized by broad arches and "really fine pressed brick," popular during the late 1800s.

REFERENCE  
DO NOT CIRCULATE

Vigo County Public Library





Tribune-Star/Bob Poynte

**Wreck wrecked:** A gaping hole in the northwest corner of depot brings gasps to preservationists



# Historic LANDMARKS - (WV) Depot on hold

The city remains in active support of local preservationists' efforts to spare the damaged Big Four Depot despite court action Thursday that brought the landmark closer to a possible date with the wrecking ball.

Mayor P. Pete Chalos said Friday he will continue to deny Consolidated Rail Corp. a demolition permit. Chalos is hopeful a dialogue he is attempting to forge between Conrail and the Vigo Preservation Alliance will buy time for the alliance.

The alliance mounted a public-support campaign for sparing the depot soon after a June 9 court order prevented demolition from continuing. A final legal attempt to save the depot failed Thursday when Greene Circuit Judge David K. Johnson denied an injunction.

Conrail has amended its intentions to knock down the structure to make room for a straightening of nearby tracks, offering to give the alliance a month-to-month lease on the structure.

In addition, Conrail has offered \$25,000 — the depot's appraised value — for helping uproot the building and move it, a Conrail spokesman said Friday.

"Neither is a satisfactory solution," alliance secretary-treasurer Fred Nation said, adding that Conrail has given its first evidence of flexibility in the situation.

Asked if the city was skating on thin legal ice by continuing to deny the permit, Chalos said, "We would deny it, but I'm sure they could go across the street to the judge and say, 'The mayor really doesn't have a good reason,' and get an injunction against the mayor. I don't know how much they want to push that."

Chalos said the fate of the depot remains in Conrail's hands.

SEP 15 1984  
Ts SEP 15 1984



*Historic Landmarks*

# Big 4 hearing moved to Sullivan

*TS JUN 26 1984*

Community Affairs File  
Sullivan County has been chosen as the site for a courtroom showdown in local efforts to keep Conrail from continuing demolition of the Big Four Depot at Seventh and Tippecanoe streets.

Vigo Circuit Judge Robert H. Brown granted a change of venue requested by Conrail attorney Jordan Lewis, who claimed publicity was hindering chances of getting a fair trial in Vigo County.

Lewis and attorney Teri M. Lorenz narrowed a list of four proposed sites that included Vermillion, Parke, Sullivan and Clay counties.

Lorenz represents Jon Devereaux, 1327 N. Ninth St., who entered into a contract with Conrail in August for buying the depot. The contract was signed on the stipulation that it was subject to Conrail management approval which Conrail denied May 29.

Lewis rejected Vermillion and Lorenz struck Parke. Lewis came back and struck Clay, leaving Sullivan Circuit Judge George E. Taylor to act on a preliminary injunction, granted last week by Brown, sparing continued demolition.

Brown granted the injunction, apparently persuaded that enough public interest has emerged supporting depot restoration.

Vigo Preservation Alliance, which has backed Jon Devereaux's suit with a \$10,000 property bond, has mounted a petition drive to save the depot.

REFERENCE  
DO NOT CIRCULATE

Community Affairs File

Vigo County Public Library



# Two landmarks' fate uncertain

By Joe Baker

Tribune-Star Staff Reporter

The fate of two local landmarks remained uncertain Tuesday.

A Chicago developer emerged from negotiations last week optimistic that he will acquire the Terre Haute House, although no deal was forthcoming. Another group expressing interest has dropped its bid to purchase the property at Wabash Avenue and Seventh Street.

And a local toy manufacturer said unless Conrail makes good on a sales contract, he might sue the railroad to force sale of a nearly 100-year-old train depot at Seventh and Tippecanoe streets.

Former resident Steve Cornell reportedly was hopeful that talks with aides of Mary Fendrich Hulman, who owns the Terre Haute House, will result in his acquiring the 57-year-old hotel — someday.

"I don't think he was ever real optimistic that things would move fast," Mayor P. Pete Chalos said earlier this week. "He's optimistic that in the long haul, he'll get the Terre Haute House."

Cornell has contemplated turning the 10-story building, which has been closed for 13 years, into a plush retirement center. He said between \$5 million and \$6 million would be needed to restore the interior of the building.

The Alliance for Growth and Progress has targeted restoration of the Terre Haute House as the cornerstone of downtown revitalization. The site, where the House's forerunner, the Prairie House, was built in 1838, is listed on the National Register of Historical Places.

Meanwhile, sale of the train depot continues to hang in the balance.

Conrail refuses to finalize sale of the property, reportedly for \$25,000, although a sales contract has been signed, prospective owner John Devereaux, 1327 N. Ninth St., said Tuesday.

The contract was signed in August and a final closing, scheduled in February, was never conducted, Devereaux added.

Conrail officials "will not identify what the problems are," Devereaux said. A Conrail media representative in Philadelphia said Tuesday she will have information on the status of property ownership later this week.

Devereaux said he has contracts lined up to sell his toys through various sales outlets once he gets the go-ahead to take over the depot. He added 40 persons would be hired within 90 days to accommodate an expanded toy-manufacturing operation.

Chalos said he has informed Conrail officials that if the Devereaux deal falls through, "The city would be interested in buying it to preserve it or sell it to somebody."

REFERENCE  
DO NOT CIRCULATE

T s MAY 23 1984



T s JUN 3 1984

Community Affairs File

# Wrecking ball is next for Big Four train depot

Historic Landmarks (WV)

Community Affairs File

By Joe Baker  
Tribune-Star Staff Reporter

It is just a matter of time apparently before the nearly 100-year-old Big Four train depot at Seventh and Tippecanoe streets faces a date with the wrecking ball.

Consolidated Rail Corp. made inroads for acquiring a wrecking permit this week. Mayor P. Pete Chalos said unless a legitimate buyer is forthcoming he will not make another effort to spare the old depot.

Chalos called for preservation of the structure last year, culminating in Conrail's decision in August to award Jon Devereaux, 1327 N. Ninth St., a proposed sales contract later that month. Devereaux was among persons submitting sealed-bids for acquiring the property.

Devereaux, who operates a toy manufacturing concern out of his northside home, said he wanted the

old depot for expanding operations. He added that expansion would create 40 new jobs within 90 days.

Conrail officials told Devereaux in a letter dated May 24 that management turned down his bid to purchase. The letter added that Conrail intended to follow through on plans to demolish the structure to make room for straightening tracks immediately east of the depot.

Chalos said the city's only involvement since last year, when Conrail first threatened to demolish the structure, has been to press Conrail for selling the property, but Conrail has to have the final say on whether a sale becomes final.

"I think they gave us an honest chance last year (to find a buyer)," Chalos said. "We'd ask them again if we thought there was a group with enough money to do something with the building.

"But to save a building and leave it to lay again means the community doesn't really want to save it,"

Chalos added.

Chalos entertained possibilities of condemning the property for public use if a legitimate buyer came forward with an offer.

Asked whether such a move would place the city in a legal jam with Devereaux, Chalos said he was uncertain.

"He may have some legal status in this, I don't know," Chalos said. "I don't know what he is planning to do as far as his bid on it is concerned. I don't want to interfere with his bid."

Devereaux said if the city condemned the property and attempted to sell it to someone else, he would consider legal intervention. Meanwhile, he is looking to get back \$2,500 in earnest money he paid for acquiring the property.

Conrail officials said in the letter to Devereaux, "We will arrange to request a voucher to cover the reimbursement..."

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REFERENCE



# Wrecking ball dangles over Big 4

Historic Landmarks (H.L.M.)  
(W.V.)  
Community Affairs File  
T: JUN 11 1984  
By Kathy Gurchiek  
Tribune-Star Staff Reporter

The wrecking ball figuratively hangs in the balance on the site of Terre Haute's last remaining train station, the Big 4 Depot, at Seven and Tippecanoe streets.

A temporary injunction issued by Circuit Judge Robert Brown Saturday to halt demolition arrived after demolition had stopped for the day.

The northwest side of the 100-year-old depot was demolished Saturday, but the rest of the structure remains standing. Razing started about 4:25 p.m. and work stopped for the evening about 35 minutes later, said Gene Vaughn, president of the Vigo Preservation Alliance.

Conrail spokesmen said earlier that the railroad plans at some time to straighten a curve near the depot, apparently requiring removal of the building to do so.

The injunction, as a matter of contractual law, was requested by John Devereaux, 1327 N. Ninth St. Devereaux signed a contract with Conrail Railroad in August to buy the 100-year-old building and restore it as a toy shop.

A final closing on the deal, scheduled in February, was never conducted, Devereaux said earlier.

Vaughn was on the site after learning that razing of the building was changed from Monday to Saturday. Judge Brown was contacted and requested to issue a temporary injunction.

"All we were trying to do was gain a little time," said Vaughn. "Our concern was to stop the demolition."

The contractor agreed to wait an hour when asked to postpone demolition until the injunction arrived. An hour later the legal papers had not arrived, although it had been granted, Vaughn said.

"We knew we were going to get an injunction," but the contractor had already waited, and told Vaughn that without seeing the legal document demolition had to proceed.

"It was frustrating. Absolutely frustrating" to see the backhoe gouge out chunks of the building when we knew we legally had demolition stopped, Vaughn said.

Demolition started about 4:25 p.m., wrecking the former baggage room and the northwest corner of the main wall, Vaughn said. When work stopped for the day about 5 p.m., the injunction still had not arrived.

"I'd just like to know why time was so vital?" said Vaughn, puzzled as to why demolition started just 35 minutes before quitting time. The building had been standing idle about seven years, he said.

Vaughn said he and other persons he spoke with had not realized demolition was a certainty, believing the building already had been saved.

Devereaux could not be reached for comment, but his wife Lisza said she was very surprised and extremely disappointed that demolition began Saturday. She chastised the Tribune-Star for not having a reporter or photographer at the site, although when asked, she apparently was as surprised as the newspaper that demolition began Saturday.

"Of course" she was surprised, she replied when asked.

"It's bigger than Sony," she said in a telephone interview Sunday night. "It's Terre Haute's history."

Parts of the inside of the building earlier were torn out, including many of the floor supports, ceiling supports, windows and benches.

The Alliance is acting as Devereaux's bonding agent with the cooperation of the Historic Landmark Society, Vaughn said in a telephone interview Sunday.



Community Affairs File

HISTORIC LANDMARKS

# Depot fate remains clouded

OCT 9 1984  
By Joe Baker  
Tribune-Star Staff Reporter

The fate of the Big Four depot remains in doubt following a meeting last week of local preservationists and depot owner Consolidated Rail Corp.

Four Midwest officials of Conrail and four members of the Vigo Preservation Alliance attended the meeting, which was called at the behest of Rep. John Myers, R-Ind., Fred Nation, alliance secretary-treasurer, said.

"We were very happy with their attitude, given the fact they hadn't been communicative before," Nation said.

With legal impediments out of the way for barring continued demolition of the depot, Nation said Conrail officials agreed to consider other options to tearing down the depot to accommodate a straightening of tracks near the depot at Seventh and Tippecanoe streets.

Nation, quoting Conrail officials, said an "S" curve near the depot creates more stress on tracks and higher maintenance costs than straight tracks.

Conrail said the cheapest way to rectify the problem is to straighten tracks on property made available through depot demolition.

Nation said Conrail officials, whom he described as "still emphatic" that the curve must be eliminated, agreed to look at other track configurations which would stem higher maintenance costs and still leave the depot intact.

As long as a dialogue exists between Conrail and the alliance, Nation said Conrail "would be violating the spirit of the meeting Friday" if it continued demolition, which was halted in June by a court order.

"The next move is up to us to get back to them on some temporary shoring up" of the depot, which was damaged by that partial destruction, Nation said. He added that the alliance would be in contact with Conrail Chief Executive Officer L. Stanley Crane by Friday.

The alliance has some resources, Nation said, but Historic Landmarks of Indiana, Greencastle, which voiced the necessity of shoring up the building, could help.

REFERENCE  
DO NOT CIRCULATE

Vigo County Public Library



Big Four Depot

REFERENCE  
DO NOT CIRCULATE

Community Affairs File

Vigo County Public Library

Community Affairs File

Historic Landmarks (WU)

## Depot may become restaurant if not derailed by Conrail

Is FEB 23 1986

By Joe Baker  
Assistant City Editor

Conrail's unwillingness to sell the Big 4 Depot where it stands remains the only obstacle to a local couple investing \$500,000 to convert the 88-year-old reminder of the city's railroading heritage into an upscale restaurant.

"We have no reason to be very optimistic" that the sale will be forthcoming, Vigo Preservation Alliance secretary Fred Nation said in a recent interview. "All Conrail has done is to offer to give us the building and \$25,000 to move it."

That \$25,000 would be the cost Conrail has estimated for knocking

down the structure at Seventh and Tippecanoe streets. The demolition would accommodate the straightening of nearby railroad tracks — Conrail's reason for wanting to demolish the building.

Nation added, "The only hopeful sign is that Conrail has not knocked down the building which they could do if they wanted."

An injunction barring demolition was imposed in June 1984, shortly after a portion of the structure was demolished. And when legal remedies ran out a month later, Mayor P. Pete Chalos denied Conrail a demolition permit.

Chalos has continued his support for developing the structure, Nation said, and offices of Lt. Gov. John Mutz, Gov. Robert Orr and

Sens. Richard Lugar and Dan Quayle have been in contact with Conrail Chief Executive Officer L. Stanley Crane in recent weeks amid attempts to spare the structure.

"We're [Alliance members] trying to demonstrate that we have a bonafide offer and there is historical importance" attached to the depot, Nation said.

That bonafide offer was made in the fall by a local couple — whose names Nation has kept confidential.

The couple have never been in the restaurant business before, he said. They sold a non-related business they owned last year, he added.

"They want to carry out a railroad theme...It would be an upscale restaurant, [that can] probably compete with the best restaurants in town."

Financing has all but been assured.

"It's kind of a chicken-and-egg thing," Nation said. "The bank is reluctant to do anything until something can be worked out" for acquiring the building.

Indiana State University has offered to lease 50 spaces to the proposed restaurant, he said.

In addition, the Indiana Senate has approved a bill aimed solely at permitting liquor sales in the proposed restaurant. The House had not yet acted on the bill by Wednesday.

REFERENCE  
DO NOT CIRCULATE



Ts NOV 22 1986

## Gosport firm picked ✓ to finish off Big Four

HISTORIC LAND MARKS - WV

H&H Trucking of Gosport has been selected to finish demolishing the Big Four Depot at Seventh and Tippecanoe streets, Conrail spokeswoman Patricia Linskey said Friday.

The job should start in early December and be done by the end of the month, she said.

The wrecking job was halted in June 1984 by a court injunction.

Linskey said Consolidated Rail Corp.'s policy is to eliminate old buildings that pose a potential hazard.

The Vigo Preservation Alliance can have whatever items of historical value it wants from the old

building for free, she said.

Fred Nation, secretary-treasurer of the Alliance, said Friday that the top of the round tower at the station may be used as a gazebo at another site, and other items including two large double-sided benches and some small stained-glass windows may be used in other preservation projects.

He had kind words for Conrail for allowing part of the building to be salvaged.

"We're very pleased with their cooperation in this matter," he said.



Big Four Depot

Vigo County Public Library

Community Affairs File

# Conrail plans to raze Big 4 depot

Historic Landmarks (WV)

By Donna Christenberry  
Tribune-Star Staff Reporter

NOV 05 1986

Conrail has notified Mayor P. Pete Chalos that it plans to finish wrecking the Big Four train depot at Seventh and Tippecanoe streets, ending a two-year stalemate over the partially demolished building.

"They're making arrangements to remove the depot," Chalos said of a letter he received recently from L. Stanley Crane, chairman of the board of Consolidated Rail Corp.

Describing attempts to save the old train station, which even included a court injunction to halt demolition in June 1984, Chalos said,

"It's been a trying situation. I'm glad there's a resolution."

While Conrail has made no application yet for a new demolition permit, Chalos said the city has been contacted by a contractor interested in bidding on the job.

Even though efforts to save the station have failed, the Vigo County Preservation Alliance is still talking with Conrail about saving remnants.

"They've been very active in seeking us out this time," said Fred Nation, spokesman for the Alliance. "We've had several conversations with Conrail officials in Pittsburgh about salvaging some items."

Conrail has not yet replied to a letter the Alliance sent two weeks ago. In that letter,

Nation said the Alliance detailed items it considered worth saving. Listed among them are two large double-sided benches and the seal of the Big Four in terrazzo.

"Most items would have to be removed during demolition," Nation said. That especially holds true for the tower. Nation said an advertising agency has expressed interest in setting it up near the tracks as a gazebo.

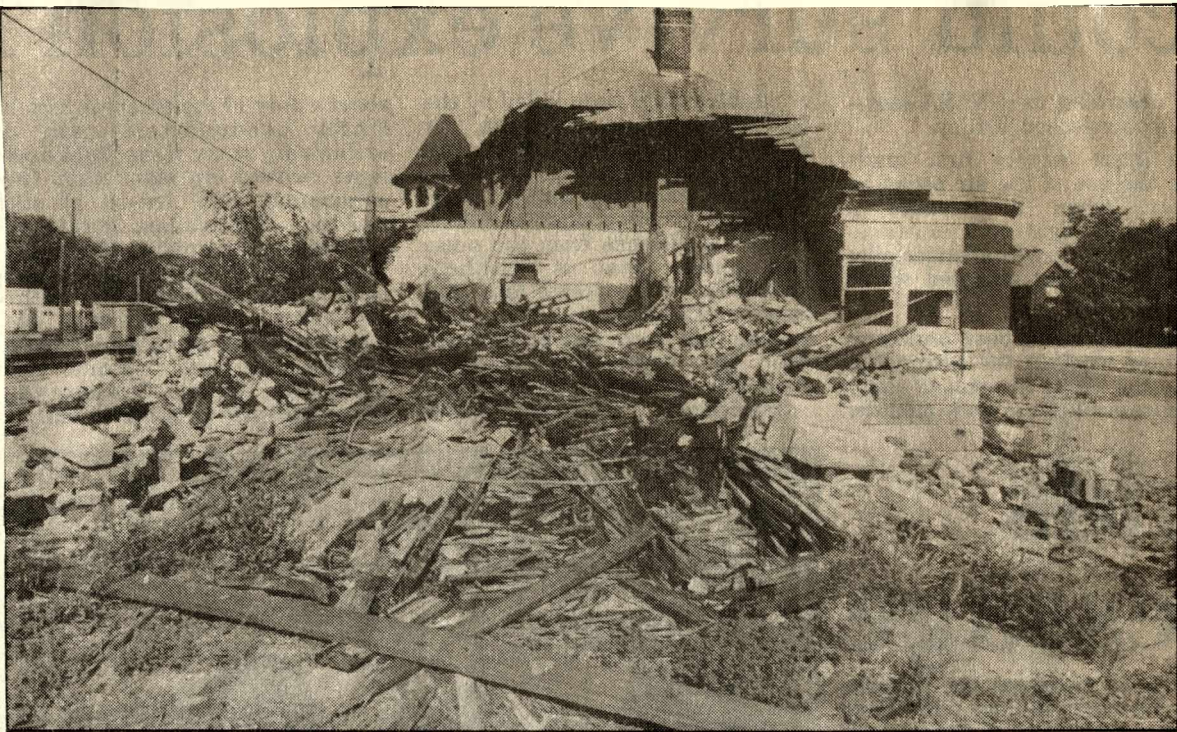
The mayor said that "we'll miss this historic building, but in its present situation, there's not much else you can do with it."

"We'll have our chance to save other historic buildings," Chalos said. "I'd especially love to see the Terre Haute House converted and become a factor in the revitalization of downtown."

REFERENCE  
DO NOT CIRCULATE



Big Four Depot



Tribune-Star/Jim Avelis

**Eyesore:** Debris litters northwest corner of train depot caught in middle of dispute.

# Landmark decisions

## Historian, Alliance lock horns

AUG 2 1986  
By Liz Ciancone  
Tribune-Star Staff Reporter

Two years ago the wrecking ball knocked out the northwest corner of the Big Four Depot. Demolition was halted by court order. Now, two years later, the standoff between the Conrail owners and the Vigo Preservation Alliance continues while the station deteriorates.

It's time to demolish the station, straighten the backcurve in the track and get on with the business of building the image of a progressive Terre Haute, Vigo County's historian Dorothy Clark advocates.

"It [the depot] is not historic in any way, it's not architecturally interesting in any way and it has been allowed to deteriorate to the point where it is an eyesore and a safety hazard," Clark said Friday.

Not so, countered Fred Nation, secretary-treasurer of the Vigo Preservation Alliance.

"The Big Four Depot is both architecturally and historically significant," he said. "The Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana has listed it as 'outstanding,' the topmost category of three possible listings.

"Two years ago they examined the station and found it 99-percent restorable," Nation said. "The damage to the northwest area is not integral to the main building. Certainly it has been damaged and certainly it has deteriorated, but it is still restorable."

Nation said that the alliance was working with a local couple who have plans, sketches and have talked with banks about putting a restaurant in the old depot.

"They are prepared to invest \$500,000 to \$600,000 in the restoration," he said. "The only problem has been Conrail's reluctance to sell."

Clark said that the building is not suitable for use by any sort of commercial enterprise to be frequented by the public. It's proximity to the railroad track makes liability insurance unavailable or prohibitively expensive, she said.

"It's a hazard as it stands," she said. "Children or curious adults can get into the building and it may fall down on their heads. There's not enough building to put in a heating plant and the plumbing is shot."

"With present concerns about shipping nuclear waste, that curve in the track is another safety issue. That curve needs to

be straightened."

Nation said the building is boarded and locked but admitted that a determined child or adult could gain access to the building.

"We have expressed concern to the railroad about the rubble in the destructed area, but they won't act or permit others to act," Nation said.

The alliance hired an engineer as a disinterested third party to study the configuration of the track, which Conrail says it must raze the station to straighten.

"He told us that the backcurve meets federal safety standards as it is," Nation said. "He said, and Conrail agreed, that it [the curve] is a maintenance problem rather than a safety problem. It costs more to maintain the curve than it would cost to maintain a straight track."

"The real solution, according to the engineer, is to go inside the present track — move the roadbed slightly north. That would take some residential property, but that's mostly vacant anyway. The railroad agrees, but it would be more costly — they already own the present roadbed," Nation said.

Nation said it doesn't appear that the issue is even close to being resolved.

Community Affairs File

Vigo County Public Library

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Big Four Depot

## Conrail deprived city of past and future

15 OCT 10 1986

### To the Editor:

Your editorial "Protecting our past and our future" (Sept. 29, 1986) contains several serious statements that are incorrect and that do a disservice to those who are active in the local preservation movement.

Let us set the record straight. In June 1984, Conrail's demolition contractor began demolition of the Big Four Depot at 3:30 p.m. on a Saturday afternoon, moments before a restraining order arrived. Since that date, the Vigo Preservation Alliance has worked diligently and continuously to save the Big Four station and find a new use for it.

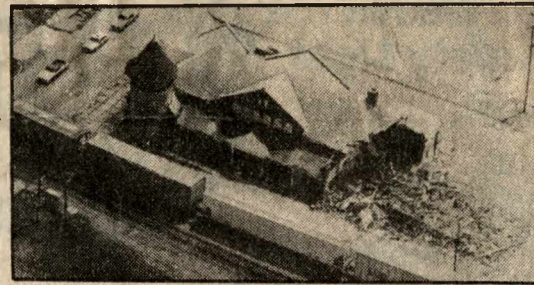
While there have been several potential investors during that time, the most serious was a local couple who began their efforts to buy the station in September 1985. They engaged a well-known local architect, developed plans and sought financing for a \$500,000-plus project designed to restore and renovate the station into a first-class restaurant, a project sorely needed by the community. These efforts attracted wide support, including that of Mayor Pete Chalos.

During that period of time, three major meetings were conducted with Conrail officials by the VPA [Vigo Preservation Alliance], along with the mayor and other interested parties. The object of these meetings was to persuade Conrail to agree to sell the Big Four Depot to private investors. Conrail's position has been that track improvement is necessary in that area and that the cheapest — not the best — way to proceed is to move the tracks about 10 feet south of current location and into the area currently occupied by the station.

The VPA's response, supported by a consulting engineering study, is that the tracks should be moved northward and that a slight relocation from Sixth Street eastward to Locust is the proper way to proceed. While Conrail basically agreed, the company said it was unwilling to spend the funds required to do the job correctly.

Working closely with the mayor and with the office of Sen. Richard Lugar, several options were explored to help fund a track-improvement project that would accomplish the objectives of improving track safety through the area and save the station. Some progress has been made, but not enough to persuade Conrail to commit to a program that would allow work to begin on the rehabilitation of the Big Four.

About one month ago, Conrail delayed the next meeting for two more months. At that time,



Big Four: Left in shambles by Conrail

our investors decided that they could not afford to wait any longer and that the prospects of ultimately reaching a beneficial agreement were not good.

When our investors withdrew, the VPA informed Mayor Chalos of the situation and told him we would no longer oppose the demolition of the Big Four, since Conrail gave no indication that a favorable settlement was possible.

During the last two years, the VPA has expended about \$10,000 on legal expenses, engineering studies and related expenses in behalf of the station. Our investors expended thousands on plans. Hundreds of hours have been spent in meetings and efforts to persuade Conrail to make the station available for adaptive reuse.

Your editorial said "Nothing was being done" and no entrepreneur was found. Both points are dead wrong. What should have been said is that the bureaucratic monolith of Philadelphia-based Conrail has deprived our community of a distinguished and historical building and of an opportunity for a new business, 40 new jobs and a half-million dollars in new investment.

While we agree that Mayor Chalos should be commended, we believe that he should be commended for his patience and his efforts to help persuade Conrail to sell the building. Similar commendation should be given to Senator Lugar, Congressman John Myers and to the hundreds of local citizens who have supported this effort.

Terre Haute has been shamefully slow in coming to realize the worth of many older buildings and their potential for reuse. The Big Four is about to join a long litany of lost landmarks. Let us hope that this litany is about to end.

— Fred J. Nation  
— The Vigo Preservation Alliance

Community Affairs File  
Vigo County Public Library

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T S JUN 23 1984

# Putting preservation on track

*Historic Landmarks (W.V.)* Community Affairs File

To many, the fight for control of the Big Four train depot looks very much like two bald men fighting over a comb. The depot, after all, is an old building that has sat vacant, unattended and seemingly unwanted for more than a decade.

Now, suddenly, the Consolidated Rail Corp. wants to tear it down and, just as suddenly, all kinds of people now say they're interested in buying and developing it.

Conrail claims it has decided that by removing the old station house existing tracks can be straightened to improve railroad service through Terre Haute. We're not engineers — civil, or train — but it's hard to see how removing that single building can appreciably alter trackage in that area.

Notwithstanding our judgment about Conrail's need for the building, it can be argued that the building belongs to Conrail and it can do what it wants with it.

We are more impressed, however, with the argument that the building belongs to the people of Terre Haute — regardless of what the property deed says. Indeed, the Big Four has historic significance to this city, not only for its architecture but for its uses during the

years. Many of us — including the father of our mayor — got off the trains at Big Four and began our lives and lineages in Terre Haute.

Such sentimentality and such love-links to our past has come into a certain kind of vogue in recent years, and deservedly so. In many cities preservation efforts have turned tattered old edifices into functional and handsome attractions.

We believe those citizens interested in preserving the Big Four station should be given the opportunity.

After all the years the building has stood empty and neglected by Conrail, we fail to understand the corporate rush to demolish it now. It is our view that Conrail has nothing to lose by giving individual investors or the Vigo County Preservation Alliance time to prove they can and will come up with the money to make the Big Four station a functional and handsome reminder of our past and resource of our future.

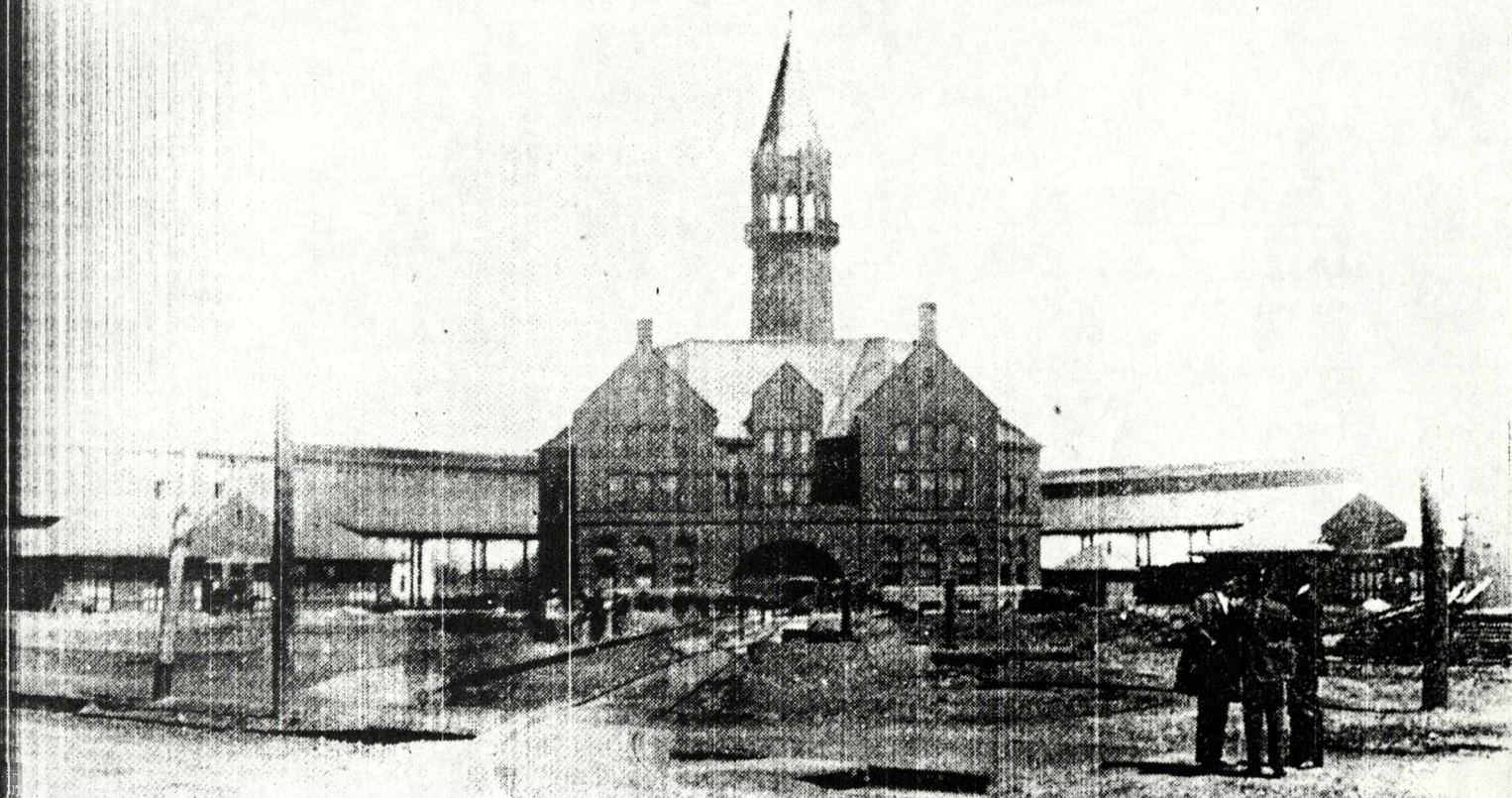
Should the investors or the community be unable to act within a reasonable period of time, it would be only fair then to let Conrail have its way — though the city hardly needs another vacant lot in or near the downtown area.

Vigo County Public Library

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CIRCULATE

Community Affairs File





This early photo of the Union Passenger Depot in Terre Haute was taken by a photographer named Biel. Notice the street car tracks entering the front. Thanks go to the Indiana Historical Society Library and the Martin Collection.



# THE C&EI FLYER

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Station as sketched by Miss Alice  
Mitchell for the cover of the Terre  
Haute Gazette newspaper dated  
Saturday December 20, 1890  
Back Cover. C. Edwards & H.  
Selsor setting on a motor car at  
Milford, IL October 1961.*

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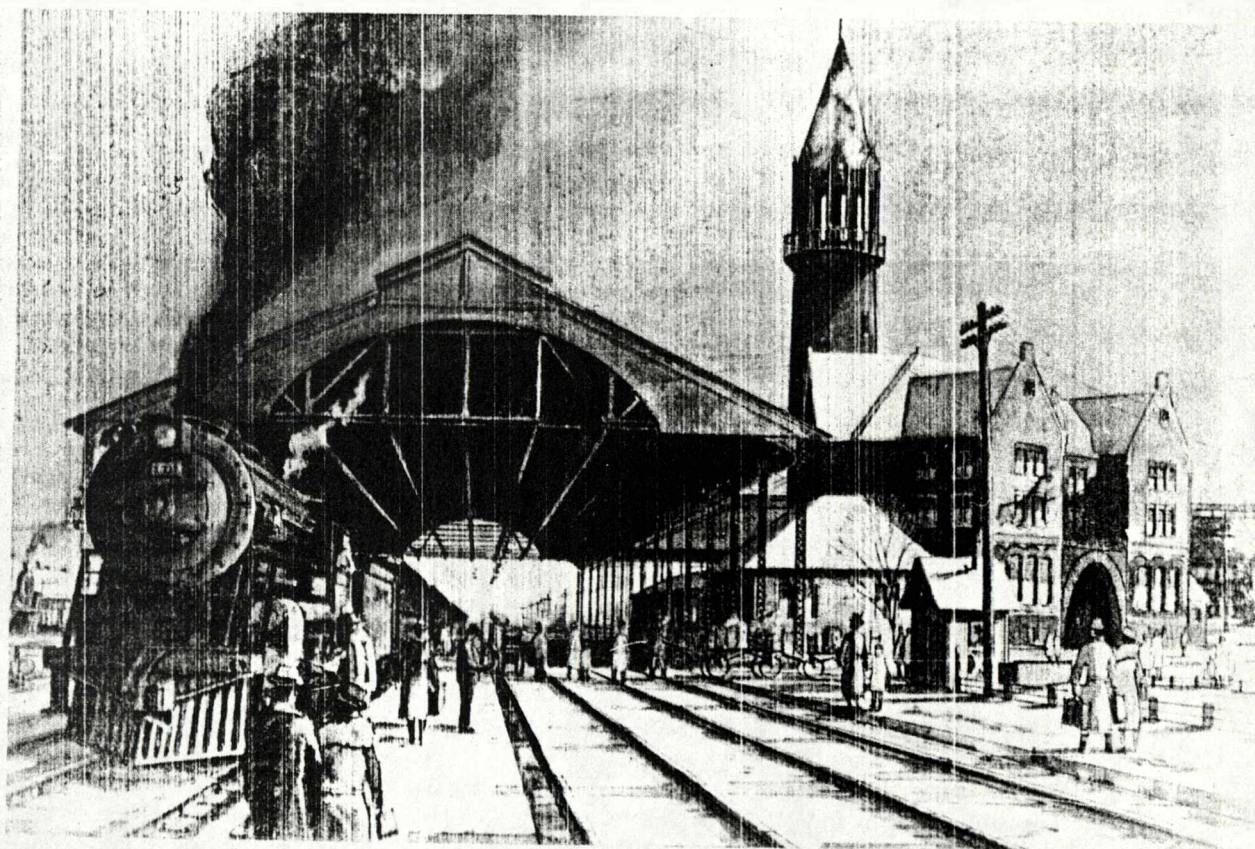
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This view of the Terre Haute Depot was a rendition on a Christmas Card. It shows the train shed from the left side of the building. The artist is no known. We give credit to the Vigo County Historical Society for furnishing us the copy.



# TERRE HAUTE UNION STATION

By J. E. O'Brien

Research by Maxwell G. Cassle

*The History of the Terre Haute Union Station*

*Historic Landmarks (W. V.)*

Humorist Will Rogers once described it as "the only depot I've ever seen with a silo on top." That was his homespun reference to Terre Haute's Union Station. The silo was the 200-foot tower atop the three-story structure that overlooked the intersection of the C&EI's Chicago-Evansville line and the Pennsylvania Railroad's double-tracked St. Louis-New York trunk.

Opened in 1893, Union Station thrived in the heyday of Orail passenger service. An Official Guide of 1941 listed 12 C&EI and 15 Pennsylvania passenger trains calling at the station. They ranged from the "Dixie" fleet and Pennsylvania's posh, all-Pullman "Spirit of St. Louis" to such make-all-stops locals as C&EI's No. 1 and Pennsylvania's 909 and 910 on the branch to Decatur, Ill.

It was here, too, back in the 1930's that the station's tenants swapped Pullmans every night for morning delivery in Indianapolis and Evansville. A competitive Big Four service through Paris, Ill, survived into the early 1940's.

Union Station, however, was something of a misnomer. Just a short taxi ride to the north was the New York Central (Big Four) station, which in 1941 saw 13 mainline trains a day plus a roundabout mixed train to and from Evansville. And by the 1940's the Milwaukee Road had taken its motor car local from Union to its own terminal at Hulman St. This was a round trip that wandered 148 miles southeast across Indiana to Westport.

The station opened for business on August 15, 1893, after more than a year of construction. Built of red stone and pressed brick, the three-story building was described in the Terre Haute Gazette as "perhaps the prettiest in the city and the tower is the highest." The original cost was to have been \$200,000, but there was a cost overrun (sound familiar?) of several thousand dollars.

Offices of the Vandalia railroad (later to be

incorporated into the Pennsylvania RR) occupied the second and third floors, and the main floor accommodated two waiting rooms, one under a glass rotunda, ticket office, facilities for the depot master and the telegraph operator, a barber shop and combination dining room and lunch counter.

Early on the morning of August 15 the moving operation from the old station took place, with the ticket office supplies and equipment being transferred on a railroad flat car.

The Gazette devoted several columns to a description of the station and of the opening day ceremonies. It noted that the ticket sellers wore white ties and the dining room waitresses wore white gowns. A police officer assigned to the old station gave up his badge of authority to become train caller in the new station.

The first arrival at the new station was the 11 a. m. train off the Peoria division of the Vandalia, followed shortly by the E. and T. H. accommodation from the south. Shortly after the station opened, the tower twice was struck by lightning, necessitating removal of all iron ornaments on the tower.

For many years train sheds were maintained over both sets of tracks, with iron fences along the tracks. These had gates, through which only ticket-holding passengers were allowed. Both the sheds and gates had been taken down by the 1920's.

There also were two outbuildings in the station complex, one on the Pennsylvania side for mail and baggage and one alongside the C&EI for express.

The station was fronted by a small, well maintained park and was served by a streetcar line that went north on Ninth Street from Wabash Avenue and looped in front of the station.

Union Station saw many notables through its years of operation. It was the site on June 18, 1948, of one of President Harry Truman's



"Give 'em Hell" speeches on a whistle stop tour that many credited for his election victory. A crowd estimated at 5,000 to 7,000 turned out for the speech.

In 1940, Eleanor Roosevelt arrived at Union Station on her way to visit Indiana State Teachers College. Her husband, President Franklin Roosevelt, passed through Terre Haute in 1937 without any advance notice. He did not make a public appearance, but he did raise a window blind and wave to the small crowd from his private car attached to Pennsylvania's train 66, the eastbound "American."

Among other Union Station visitors were Clark Gable, on a war bond tour, and Charles Lindbergh's mother.

Through the years trains passing this important four directional junction probably carried most of the big names of vaudeville, the theater, the music world and the movies. Also, St. Louis once being the western outpost of both major leagues, it can be assumed that most of the figures in baseball's Hall of Fame rode team sleepers through Union Station between St. Louis, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia and New York.

One of the biggest events occurred in 1901 when Buffalo Bill Cody and his Wild West Show, which also featured Annie Oakley came to Terre Haute in a 49-car train. Special trains arrived crowds from Union Station to the Fairgrounds where the troupe performed. The round-trip fare was 60 cents.

You might say Union Station led a charmed life. No major disasters or serious crimes disturbed its routine. In the late 1940's two youths were in the tower attempting to catch pigeons. One slipped and fell through the glass rotunda and was seriously hurt. That was about the extent of untoward incidents.

As passenger service dwindled, Union Station became a costly monument. It finally was razed in the summer of 1960.

Pennsylvania trains 30, 31, 32 and 11 survived until all mail was withdrawn. C&EI

gave up on the "Dixie Flyer" in 1965, and the combined "Georgian-Hummingbird" succumbed in 1968.

The outbuilding that served as a waiting room after the main structure was leveled continued to be used for Amtrak's brief forays through Terre Haute as the "National Limited" and the "Floridian". Today the building is used as an Afro-American Center of Indiana State University, and the park in front of the station has become an activities field for the university.

The former C&EI main is now a key freight line for CSX. The Pennsylvania's line from Indianapolis to Limesdale is gone, but the western portion to Terre Haute is now operated as a short line, the Terre Haute, Brazil and Eastern.

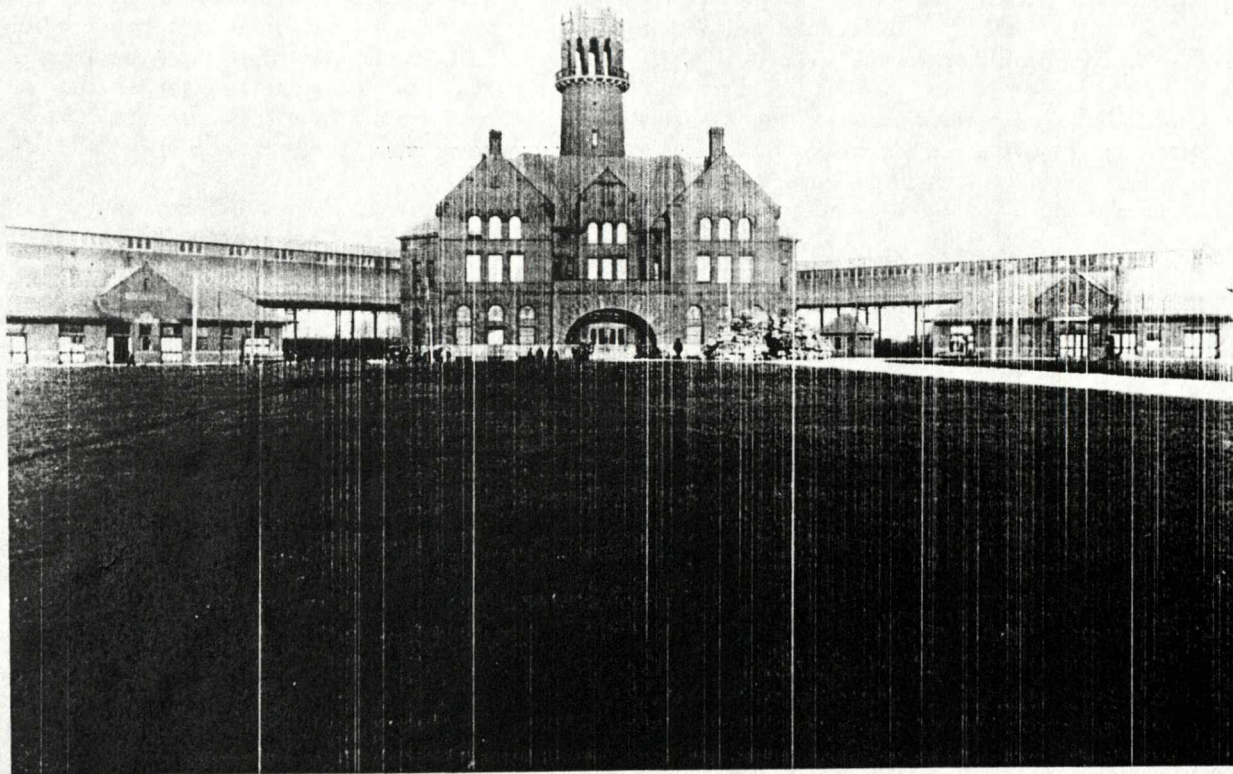
Two vivid memories of Terre Haute's Union Station remain with the author. There was that April morning in 1946 when he looked down on the Union Station platform from the fireman's seat on Pennsy. K-4 No. 3851, lead engine for the double-headed, 14-car "Spirit of St. Louis." The 75-minute trip in the engine cab from Indianapolis was the basis of an article in the Indianapolis Times, also long gone.

Then there was that evening in the late 30's as he waited on the platform to catch No. 93 for Evansville. Suddenly out of the dusk to the north a headlight appeared -- a bit too soon for 93. And this train obviously didn't intend to stop. It was a freight -- and on short time ahead of the "Dixie Limited."

It banged across the Pennsy tracks, shaking the station windows, kicking up dirt and dust, its high cars waving back and forth, and all the noise punctuated by the thump of an occasional flat wheel.

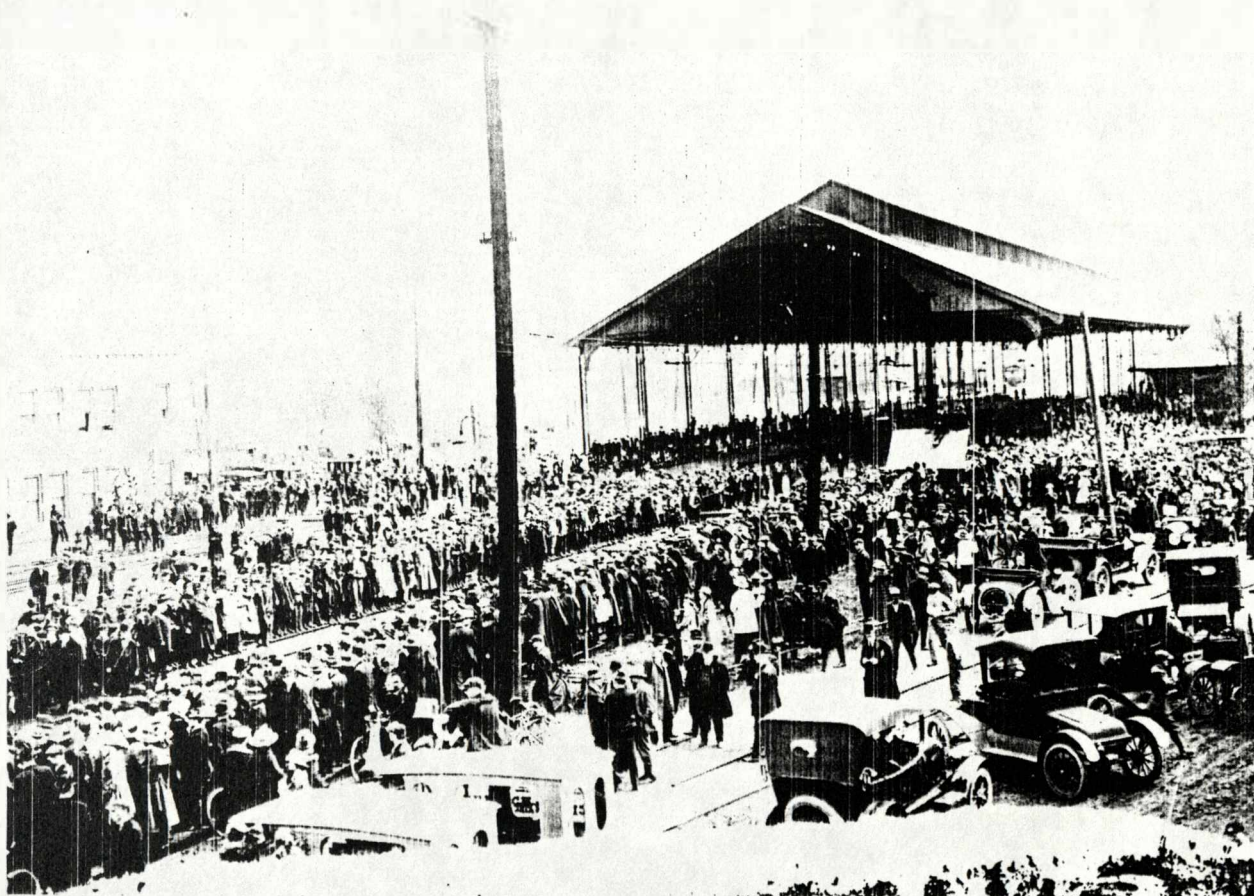
Then the caboose was past. Under the markers on the rear platform stood the rear brakeman -- ready, no doubt, to go flagging if the freight failed to reach its haven in a siding somewhere south of town.





Here is a slightly different view of the Terre Haute Depot taken before any trees were planted. The horse and buggy indicate it was taken before automobiles came into wide use. Photographer is unknown. The photo is from the Vigo County Historical Society.





This photo is showing the crowds awaiting the return of World War I soldiers. This photo from the Indiana Historical Society credits the photo to the Martin Collection





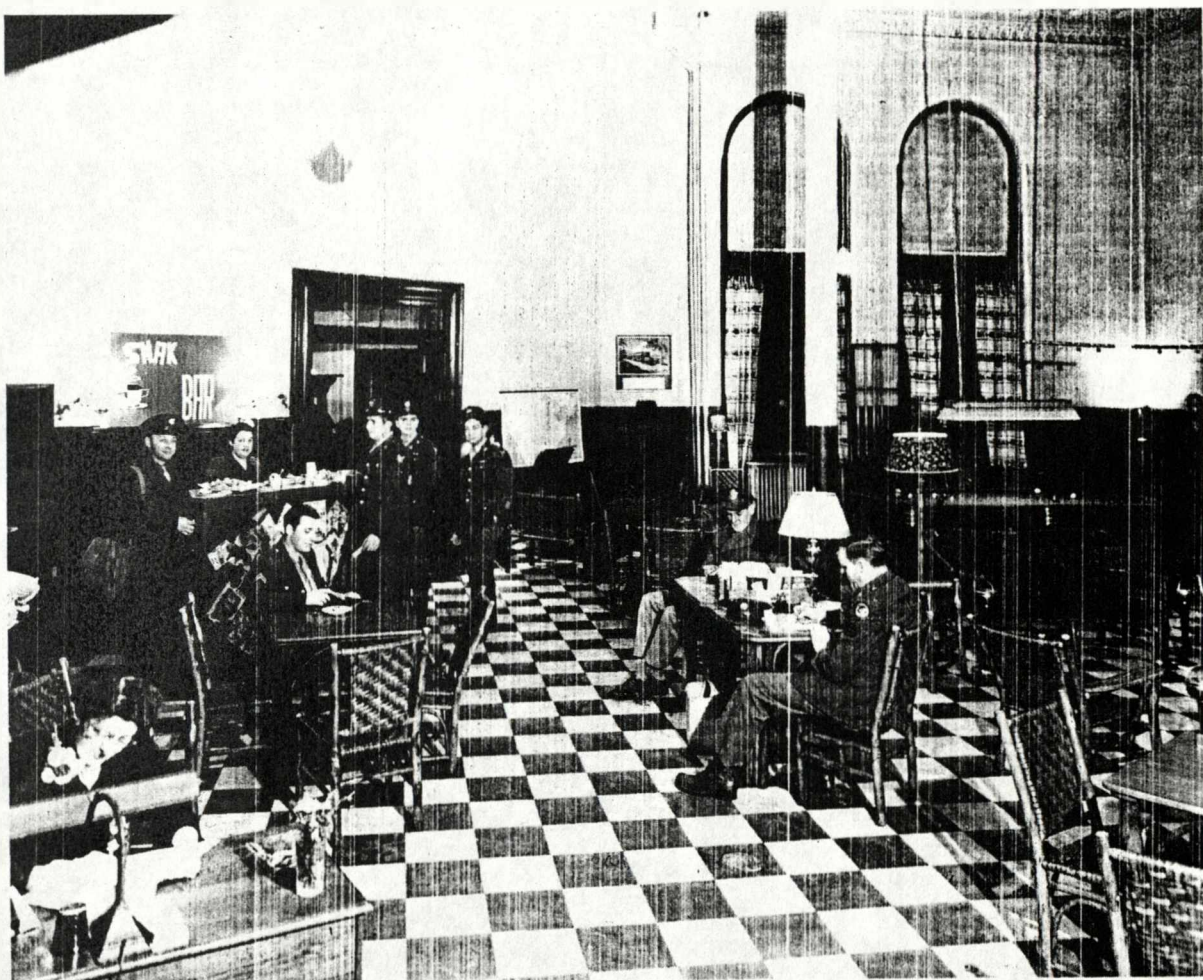
This photo of the front entrance of the Depot was taken in the 1920's. The trees were growing and you can see the automobile on the left with the street car on the right. Photo from the Vigo County Historical Society with no photographer named.





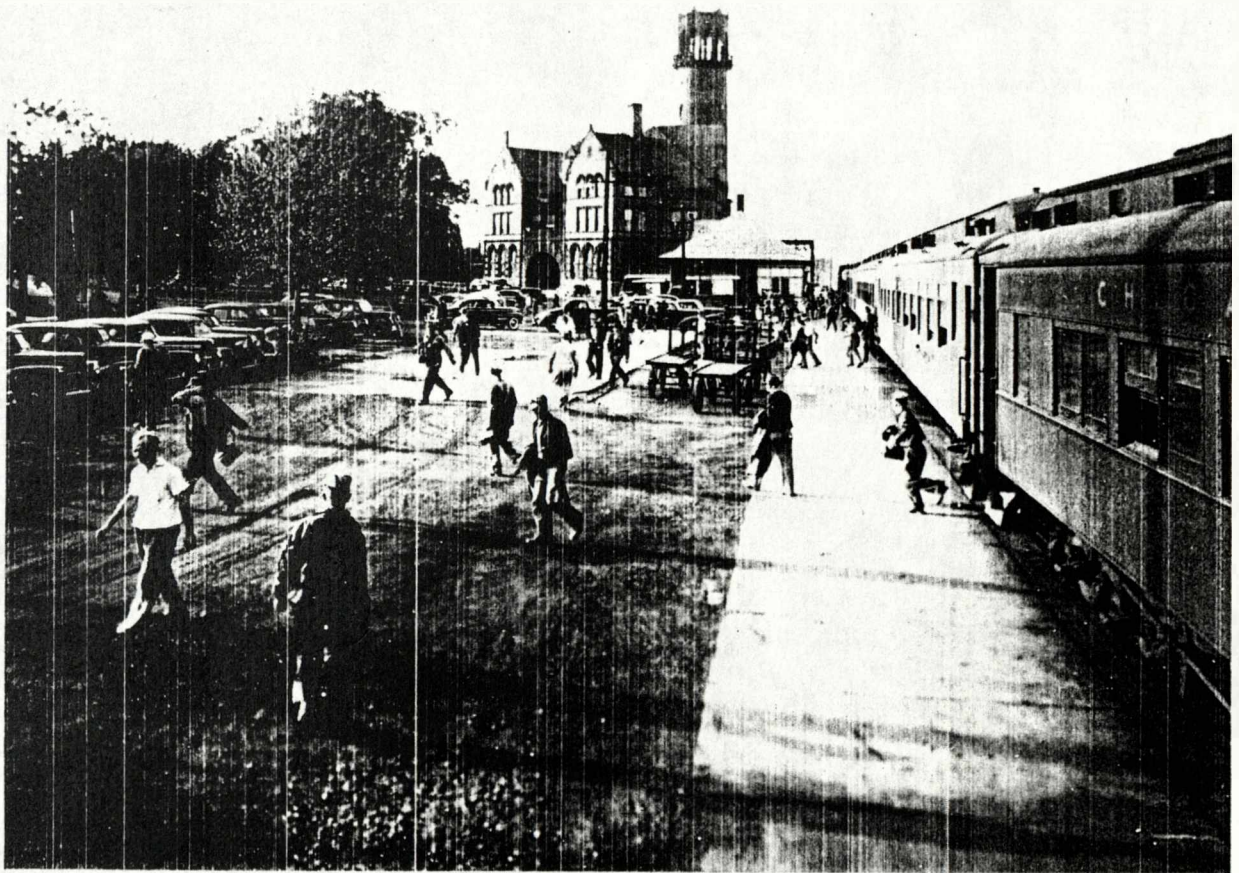
Here a view of the front entrance of the Terre Haute Depot was taken during the World War II era. The street car tracks are missing as the automobile takes over.  
Photo by Martin. From the Indiana Historical Society Collection.





This photo of the interior of the Union Depot shows the World War II "Snak Bar" set up for the service men waiting for connecting trains. This photo from the Martin Collection in the Indiana Historical Society Library.





Another scene from World War II is the C&EI train used as a commuter train from wartime factories. The caption on the photo was "A defense train arrives at Union Station in Terre Haute in 1942" From the Martin Collection in the Indiana Historical Society Library.



# THE UNION STATION

By FRANK CASSMAN

*Excerpts from the Terre Haute Gazette August 20, 1892*



When the snows of winter have come and wind shall whistle direful tunes about the high tower, it is said the new UNION station will be ready for business.

And it looks that way now. At least a few of the offices will be

ready for occupancy within a month. This week the plasterers finished their work and a large force of carpenters have been at work finishing the upper stories. The first floor is to finished in marble with a tile flooring and delay in arrival of the marble will retard the progress on this floor. The work upon the tower necessarily progress slowly. It is hard and tedious undertaking. The partly finished tower begins to look imposing indeed. The remark very frequently heard from strangers is "they ought to have put more rooms into the building and dispensed with the tower". The station, from an external view, certainly does look small, but it is not. The odd arrangement of the building makes it possible to utilize every inch of space in the structure and the visitor will find it no easy matter to locate an office in the station. The ticket office will be located in the northeast corner of the first floor. There will be two

ticket windows... In the south east corner will be the barber shop, with the general waiting room at the west of it. Under the tower a handsome little ladies' waiting room will be finished while the rotunda will be utilized as a lounging room for both sexes. The rooms on the west side of the structure on either side of the door will be used as dining and lunch rooms. The kitchen will be down in the basement and the two floors will be connected by dumb waiters. It is said that the Ohmers have decided to make a bid for the restaurant privilege and that Sandison & Burns and others in this city will be rival bidders.

On the second and third floors the arrangement of rooms is exactly the same. The different offices on the second floor will be labeled for convenience sake... The General Manager and Station Master... In the northeast corner of the third floor the train dispatchers are located. There will be three tables which are already being placed in position. Next to this, to the west is the private office of Chief Dispatcher and Auditor. The two upper floors will be finished in hard pine. The contract for the train shed will be let in the next few weeks. The General Manager expects them to be in position at least by Christmas.

Over the rotunda will be a handsome covering of cathedral glass. The glass will be within the roof and over it will be suspended dozens of incandescent



lights to illuminate it during the night. The effect will be beautiful. From the center will be suspended a large chandelier of lamps which will reach as low as the third floor. The light fixtures will all be put in next month place.

*Excerpts from the Terre Haute Gazette August 15, 1893. A year later*

## THE NEW STATION

The Vandalia's new union station was put into service today. This event, so full of importance to the city, was marked by no more ceremony than that of any ordinary removal. Early this morning the restaurant, baggage and express men began moving into the new quarters and at the arrival of the noon trains the new station was in readiness. The ticket office force was the last to move. As soon as No. 5 had passed, the ticket cases and supplies were loaded into a flat car and pushed up to the station. The only remarkable thing about the removal of this office was the fact that the ticket agents wore white ties, something never before attempted on moving day. At ten thirty Officer Martin came down and drove all the passengers up to the new station. This was his last official act before surrendering the star he has worn with so much credit for many years. A few minutes after he was installed in the new office of train caller and the new station was open for business.

The first train to stop at the new station was the 11 o'clock train of the Peoria division of the Vandalia. Soon after, the E and I. accommodation came in from the south. Both trains were late in honor of the event. Smiling Jim Hoffman piloted the first train out of the station at 11:55 a.m.

Superintendent N.K. Elliott was on hand looking after matters and all the new officials about the station were at their posts. The station is as bright as it is beautiful as can be and will no doubt attract many city visitors this evening. The opening of the depot marks an event of no small importance to Terre Haute. The city feels proud of the Vandalia system and should not fail to give President McKeen and General Manager Jno. G. Williams full credit for the magnificent gift.

The accompanying drawing (front cover) of the depot fails to do credit to the subject and calls for an apology of the part of the *GAZETTE*. A better view of the station cannot be received, however, until the extensive improvements about the approach to the depot have been completed.

### THE RESTAURANT AND DINING ROOM

The lunch and dining room put in by Ohmer, the well-known railroad restaurateur, attracted, perhaps, more attention than any other part of the building today. Both rooms presented a beautiful appearance. The handsome tables and fittings with the tasty arrangement of the lunch counter, with its new china and glassware and the profusion of green potted plants formed an entrancing picture as seen through the elegant plate glass doors.

Mr. Nick Ohmer, of Dayton Ohio, who has traveled throughout the land and spent all his life feeding railroad passengers says he has never seen anything in the land like this. "The dining and lunch room is the handsomest I have ever seen" he said. Everything is in harmony from the substantial structural qualities of the station to the heavy and costly furniture. Our kitchen and culinary



department is perfect. The company has been very liberal and we have done all in our power to make a fine restaurant." The heavy cherry counter circles and has stools that revolve. The counter was made by Clift Williams and Co. The massive tables and chairs were made by a relative of Mr. Ohmer's in Dayton, and are very beautiful. In honor of the occasion, the dining room girls always neatly attired, all wore new white gowns adding considerable color to the place. The furniture and table service is all new the management taking particular pride in the china ware, which is very choice.

#### THE CONSTRUCTION

The station will be a source of pride to Terre Haute people for many years. It is a magnificent structure, erected upon the plans of. Jannaford and Sons, the well known Cincinnati architects, and reflects great credit of the Vandalia, President McKeen and the city, The original cost was to have been 200,000, but it is estimated now that the original plans will advance the first estimate several thousand dollars...

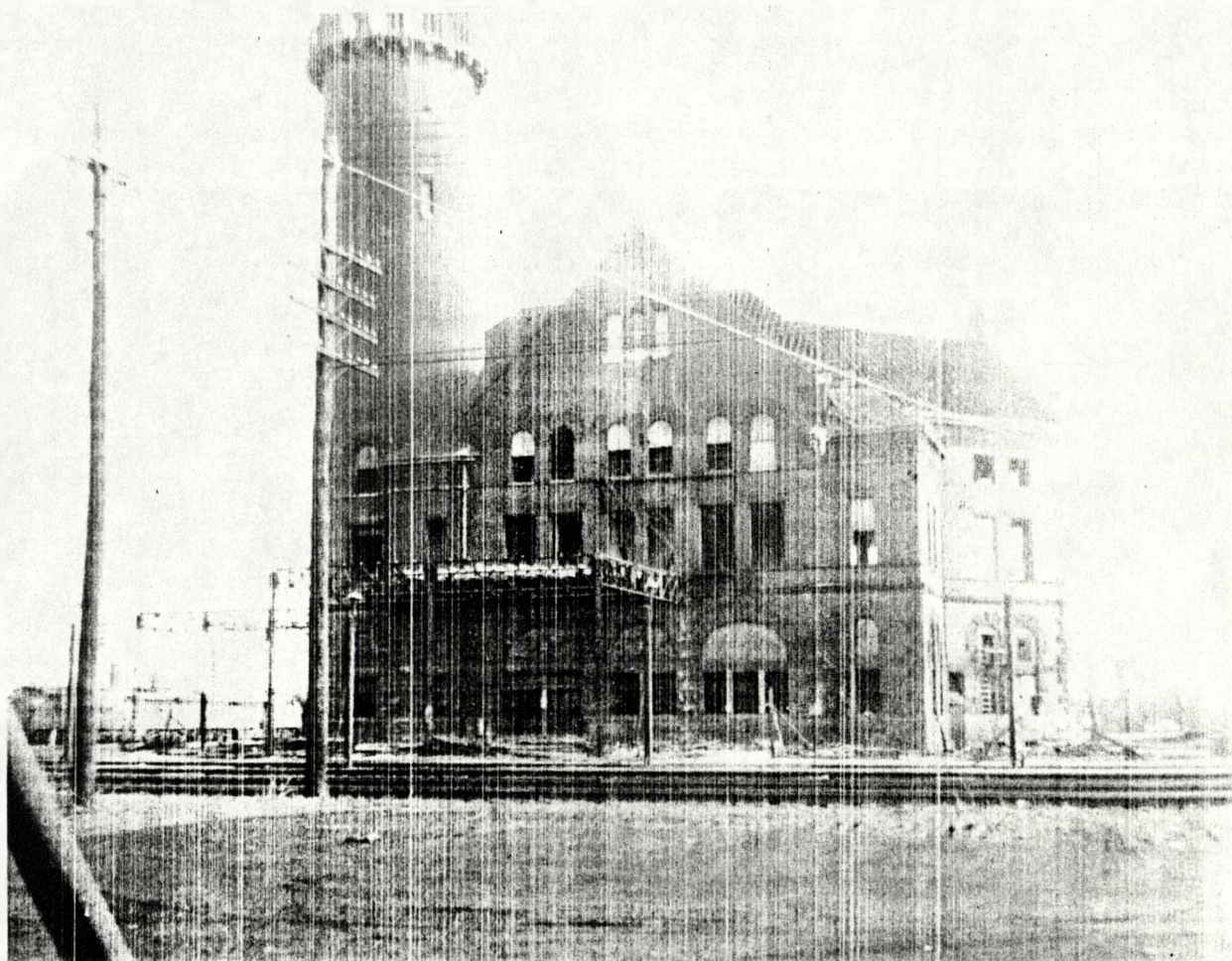
#### OLD STATION

Forty years ago (1853) the Terre Haute travelling public was supremely well satisfied by the 6 x 8 depot built at Tenth and Main streets by the T. H. & I. and C. & E. I. roads, with its small attempt at a train shed. The satisfaction did not last long, however for in a few years a demand for a new depot became imperative and President Peck of the T.H. &I. rebuilt the old brick boarding house which stood in the commons into a depot. When this depot, abandoned today, was opened the interest was as great as it is at present. The occasion was a gala day for Terre Haute, and people came for miles around to look through the building and

see the first trains come in. For almost a quarter of a century the depot answered all the uses of a station in a manner satisfactory to the people. The depot is a fine structure. The beauty can only be seen now in its completed state.

The building was contracted in 1891 and early in the spring the excavating began. For some reason the work hung in the fire for almost a year before even a good start was made. Hanniford and Sons were the architects, Jacob Miller the brick and stone contractor and Clift & Williams the carpenter contractors. The depot is three stories high, with a two hundred foot tower and large rotunda in the center. The beauty of the architecture becomes apparent at first sight. Red stone is used for the first thirty feet and after that the material is pressed brick with stone trimming. The combination makes a structure handsome, massive and durable. The building is perhaps the prettiest in the city and the tower is the highest.

The first floor is finished in quarter oak and the other stories in hard oiled pine. On the first floor are the ticket offices, Depot manager, the ladies and gents' waiting rooms, barber shop, dining room and telegraph operators' office. In addition to the two regular waiting rooms, the space under the rotunda will probably be used as a general waiting room. Simon Daniels, the tonsorial artist has gone to considerable expense to put in fixtures to matched the surroundings and has succeeded in completing a very fine shop. The Ohmers have spared no expense to furnish the beautiful lunch room and dining room, at the left of the main entrance. The first meal was served at noon today.



The beginning of the end of the Terre Haute Union Depot was this dismantling in 1960's. The final demise was the tearing down of the tower.



## Stairway in New Home Taken From Old Union Station

One of the conversation pieces at the new home of the Charles Jackley family on Canter Drive in Deerfield, now almost completed, is the cast iron stairway which leads to the second story balcony from the ground at the front of the house.

It is the stairway that led from the second floor of the old Union Station, where all the offices were located, to the floor at the base of the station's tower. Jackley purchased it following the razing of the station in the Spring of 1960.

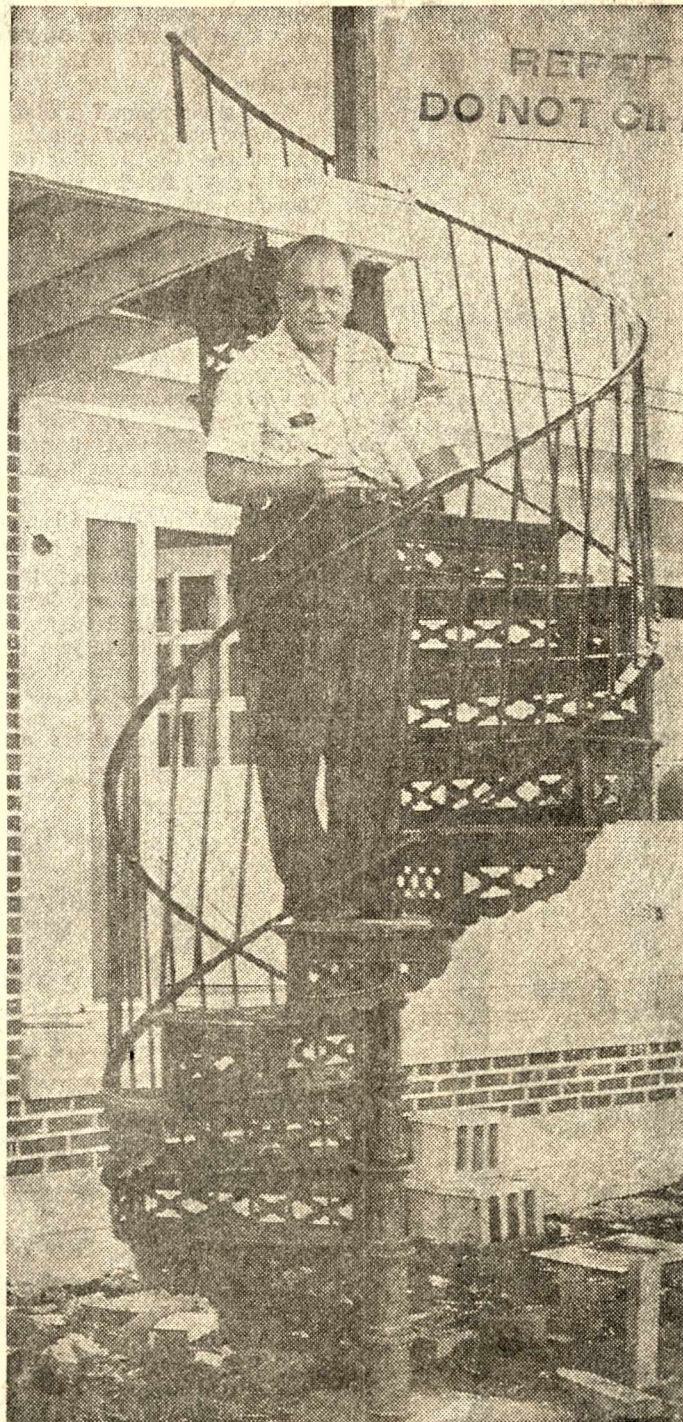
+ + +

**THE STAIRWAY** is almost 70 years old. The Union Station opened for service on Aug. 15 1893.

Originally 16½ feet high, the stairway at the Jackley residence is only 13 feet. Five steps had to be removed from the bottom to make it fit into the space for it. When setting it into place they slid the steps away in sections.

While the stairway is bolted together, some welding had to be done on the hand rail to get it in condition to use on the new home, Jackley said. When it is completed, it will be painted white.

A modern, tri-level home, the house is enhanced with this of the past, the Jackley family and their friends agree.



**JOINING OLD AND NEW** — Charles Jackley is seen working on the iron stairway that was part of the city's old Union Station, which now leads to the second floor balcony of his new home on Canter Drive in Deerfield.



# WABASH VALLEY

P R O F I L E S

A series of tributes to hometown people and events that have shaped our history.

TRIB-STAR

April 5, 2001

A9

## Union Station

American satirist Will Rogers once described Terre Haute's Union Station, which opened Aug. 15, 1893, as "the only depot I've ever seen with a silo on top."

Surrounded by a landscaped plaza, the railroad terminal complex was situated east of Ninth Street between Sycamore and Spruce, where the north-south Chicago & Eastern Illinois and the Evansville & Terre Haute railroads intersected with the Terre Haute & Indianapolis Railroad (also known as "The Vandalia Line" because TH&I had been leasing and operating the 165-mile St. Louis, Vandalia & Terre Haute Railroad since 1870). Constructed of red stone and pressed brick, the three-and-a-half-story Romanesque building was crowned by a 200-foot tower with a cone on top.

Designed by Cincinnati architect Samuel Hannaford, the new depot was the brainchild of TH&I president William Riley McKeen. Terre Haute contractor Jacob Miller supplied the brick and stone. Clift & Williams did the carpentry. Costing \$270,000, the facility replaced a former hotel at 10th and Wabash that had been converted into a depot in 1861. By 1894 nine railroads were serving the city. Ten years later, 104 passenger trains stopped daily at Terre Haute terminals, including the Big Four Depot, built in 1899 about three blocks west of Union Station.

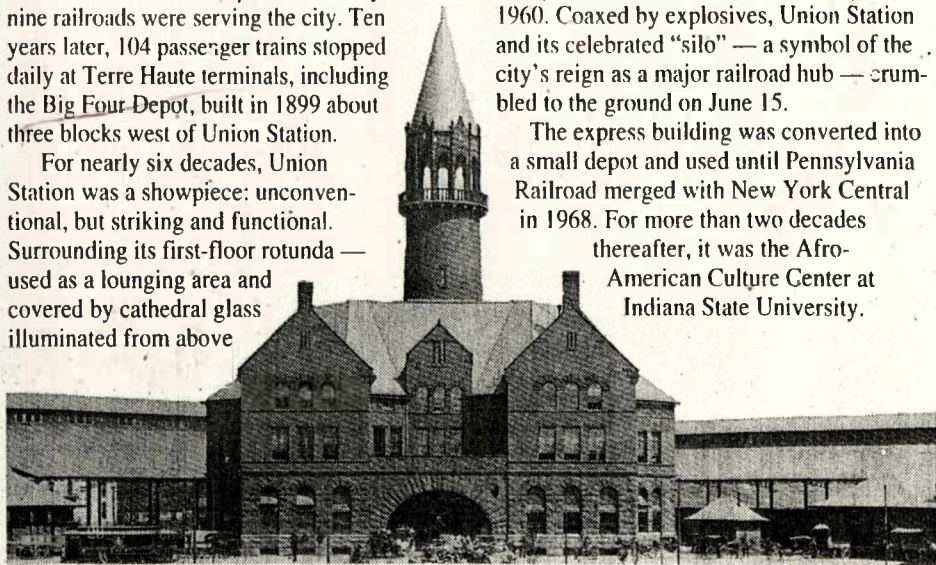
For nearly six decades, Union Station was a showpiece: unconventional, but striking and functional. Surrounding its first-floor rotunda — used as a lounging area and covered by cathedral glass illuminated from above

by incandescent lights — were ticket offices, the manager's office, a barber shop, a beauty salon and dining facilities. An elegant chandelier was suspended from the ceiling glass. The elaborate kitchen in the basement was linked to the dining room by dumbwaiters. Railroad offices were distributed throughout the second floor. Dispatchers utilized the third floor. The ground floor was finished in quartered oak. Walls on the upper floors were hard pine.

Three days after Union Station opened, McKeen sold TH&I — then the city's largest employer — to the Pennsylvania Railroad. Yet the remarkable facility continued to serve the community for 67 years and was the site of numerous notable events. Presidents, stage and screen stars, American troops and dignitaries from every discipline arrived and departed there. After being damaged several times during storms, the cone atop the tower was removed.

In the late '40s, the complex — which included two steel-framed train sheds and a railway express building — began to fall into disrepair. Demolition began in late Spring 1960. Coaxed by explosives, Union Station and its celebrated "silo" — a symbol of the city's reign as a major railroad hub — crumbled to the ground on June 15.

The express building was converted into a small depot and used until Pennsylvania Railroad merged with New York Central in 1968. For more than two decades thereafter, it was the Afro-American Culture Center at Indiana State University.



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Community Affairs File

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TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA



# Union Depot

By JUDY STEDMAN CALVERT

*Historic Landmarks (W.V.)*

Union Depot, at the northeast corner of 9th and Sycamore Streets, was opened for business in 1894. The depot was on the west side of what was then the C.&E.I. railroad tracks and on the south side of the Pennsylvania Railroad main line.

The cost of the building was \$100,000—quite an expenditure for the 1890's. Samuel Hannaford of Cincinnati was the architect. Hannaford's firm was also the architect for the present Vigo County courthouse and the buildings on the campus of the Rose Orphans Home at the corner of 25th and Wabash.

Shortly after the depot was opened the tower was struck by lightning two

times. The first incident did not result in any damage; however, the second sent a shower of bricks onto the tracks below. The iron ornaments on the tower and roof were soon removed to eliminate this danger.

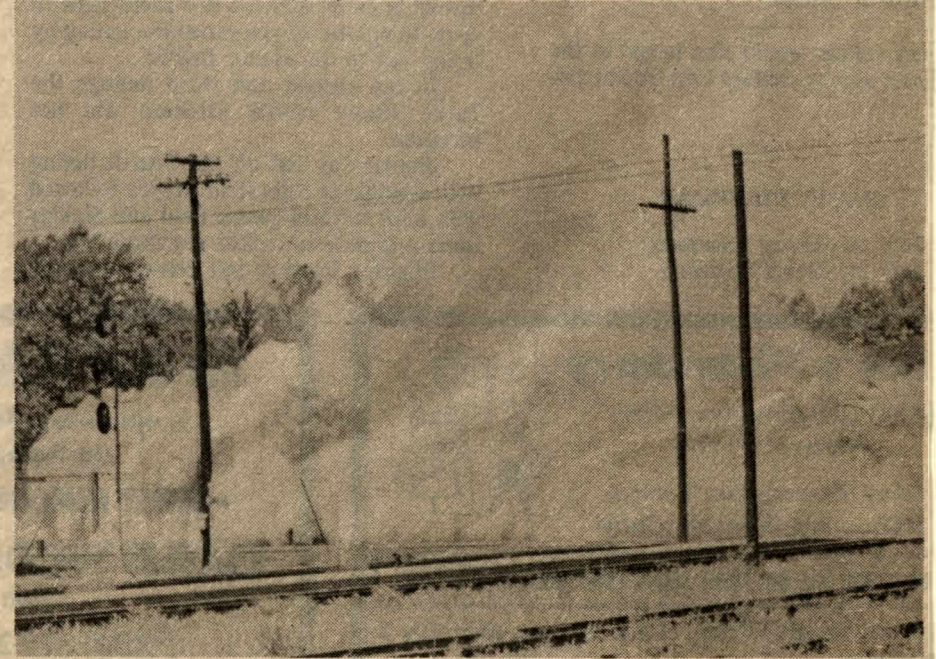
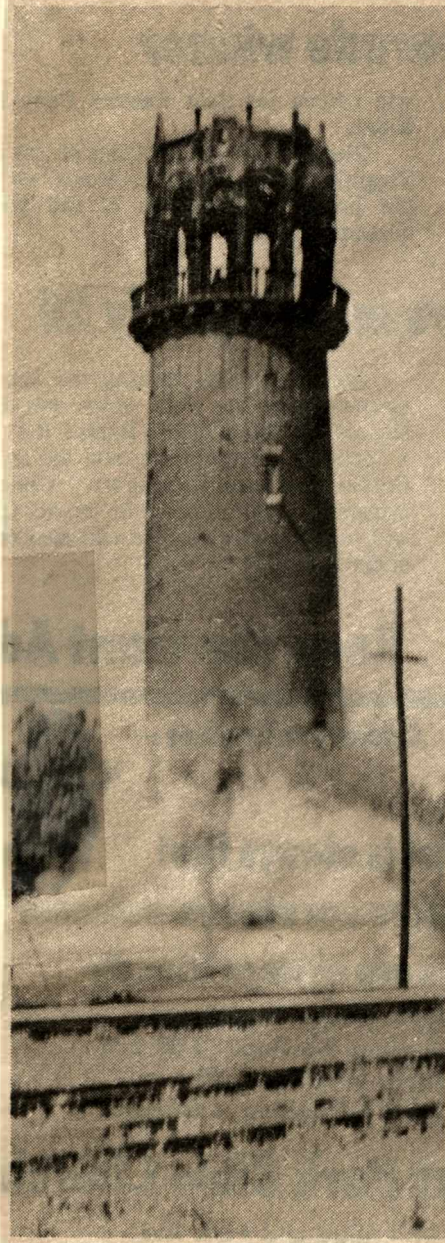
The transportation center in Vigo County for over 60 years, Union Depot was the site of the departure and homecoming of troops from the Spanish-American War, World War I, World War II, and the Korean Conflict and also the site of many speeches from the rear of platform cars when politicians used to tour the country on trains and make "whistle stops." Eleanor Roosevelt, Charles Lindbergh's mother, President Harry

Truman, and movie star Clark Gable (speaking for a war bond rally) are a few of those who came through Union Depot.

A large complex of buildings with a park-like lawn, the area was a landmark of the Wabash Valley.

The familiar tower was torn down on June 15, 1960. The only building of the complex remaining is now the Afro-American Culture Center of Indiana State University.

Photos by  
Clarence Hood



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TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA

Community Affairs File







## Suit Would Block Depot Dismantling

5-2-14-68  
An injunction suit to block demolition of the Union Station here on grounds a defective floor will be destroyed, erasing crucial evidence in a damage suit still pending on appeal, was filed yesterday in Superior Court No. 2.

The firm of Berry, Kincade and Allen brought the suit for Nola Jane Newsom of Clinton, naming the Pennsylvania Railroad Company and Harold J. Goodwin, doing business as West Side Tile and Wrecking Company, defendants.

The suit asks the court to prevent the railroad and Goodwin as contractor from demolishing the Union Station until final settlement of Mrs. Newsom's damage case. According to the complaint the Union Station was permitted to fall into a decrepit and dangerous condition, with worn, uneven and dangerous floors.

Because of this condition, the complaint sets out, Mrs. Newsom fell, suffering a broken wrist and a painful derangement of her spine, after which the railroad "capriciously and callously" refused to compensate her and she was forced to go through a jury trial.

A jury awarded her damages of \$15,000, it is set out, but the case is now on appeal by the railroad and plaintiff has no way of knowing when the case will be decided by the Appellate Court.

The suit points out that if the Union Station is torn down the railroad "will destroy valuable evidence against itself in the lawsuit," and if a retrial were necessary, jurors could not visit the station to ascertain its true condition.



# Union Station Facilities Transferred As Razing of Old Building Impends

5-3-18-60

With the moving of all offices in the more than 66-year-old Union Station to the former mail building west of it, including the ticket office and passenger waiting room, barricades have been erected about the former station preparatory to razing it.

The moving of the offices of the district sales manager, Fred Konze; the freight and passenger agent, and the two track supervisors were completed first, according to H. H. Vaughn, manager of the Pennsylvania Railroad's Southwestern Region. Last to be moved was the ticket office and waiting room serving both passengers on the Pennsylvania and the Chicago and Eastern Illinois Railroad trains.

+ + +

**THE MAIL** building now is the building to the south of the old station, which formerly was used by the Railway Express. The express company's offices now are located in the block south of the station on the east side of Ninth Street.

There is one question concerning one of the landmarks of the old station that has arisen in the minds of many persons familiar with it. On the west side of the main entrance there is a bench mark of the local altitude placed there by the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey. "Will it remain at the site?" is the query.

**THE MAIL** building has been completely renovated and modernized. The ceiling is sound proofed and fluorescent ceiling lighting is used throughout the building, which also has a new tile floor and is air conditioned. Metal window frames have been installed where the former long

See **UNION STATION**  
On Page 3, Column 5

## Union Station

Continued From Page 1

windows were filled in with brick to make the installation feasible. New and clean rest-rooms were a part of the renovation program.

All new office furniture and equipment was installed in the new station, with the exception of the benches for the patrons in the waiting room. There are two of these and they are the benches from the old building which have been refinished to match the wood paneling around the base of the walls.

+ + +

**THERE** is no lunch counter in the new station.

It is almost a year now since the Pennsylvania announced that it would dismantle the old station and its plans for the remodeling. Contract for the razing was let last month to the West Side Tile and Wrecking Company.

Razing was begun on the brick gymnasium building which originally was constructed as a passenger coach repair and paint shop in 1872. It was converted to a gymnasium during the 1920s.

Demolition of the main station was to begin following the removal of the offices. However, a suit for an injunction to prevent the demolition on the grounds a defective floor figuring in a damage suit would be destroyed was filed Feb. 18. The plaintiff was awarded \$15,000 damages by a jury but the decision was appealed by the railroad and is in the Appellate Court at present.



## PLAN RAZING Of Venerable Union Station

7-2-11-60

By MARIAN PERRY

One of Terre Haute's most famous landmarks and one which has been seen by millions of railroad travelers will be only a memory within a few months when the Union Station facilities are transferred to a more modern building and the 66-year-old passenger terminal is demolished.

An announcement of the planned removal of the Union Station building was made today by H. H. Vaughn, regional manager of the Pennsylvania Railroad Southwestern Region.

Vaughn said that a contract for the razing of the station structure and the railroad's gymnasium building a short distance east had been awarded to the West Side Tile and Wrecking Co. Work already has started on the removal of the brick gym building which orig-

inally was constructed as a passenger coach repair and paint shop in 1872. Its conversion to a gymnasium was completed in the early 1920's.

Demolition of the passenger terminal building cannot be started until the Pennsylvania's employe and the station facilities are transferred to the completely modernized building immediately west of the old structure, which will become the passenger station and office building within the next few weeks. Vaughn estimates that patrons of the Pennsylvania and the Chicago and Eastern Illinois Railroad will be using the modernized air conditioned passenger station facilities around March 1.

ive remodeling and until recent months has housed mail and express handling facilities.

Terre Haute's present Union Station building is of brick and stone construction and was opened for service on Aug. 15, 1893. The station's lofty and extensive steel train sheds which extended from Ninth street on the west to a point just east of the C.&E.I. tracks, thence southward to Sycamore street, also were completed in 1893 but were removed a number of years ago. At the turn of the century, Union Station was one of the finest terminals in the country.

The Pennsylvania's contract with the West Side Tile firm calls for demolition of the station and gymnasium buildings, leveling the area and removal of all debris from the premises.

Many famous personages have passed through the Union Station in its 66-year history. At one time the terminal served the Milwaukee Road in addition to the Pennsylvania and C.&E.I. Passenger service on the Milwaukee, which was between Terre Haute and Bedford, was discontinued many years ago.

The gymnasium building has not been used for athletic events for a number of years, but Terre Hauteans remember it as the scene of scores of thrilling sports events, particularly those games in which the Terre Haute P.R.R. men's basketball team participated. This team was one of the finest basketball fives ever developed in Indiana, winning the railroad's 13-state system championship a number of years and outclassing college and professional teams alike.



Vigo County Public Library

Community Affairs File

## THE TERRE HAUTE

Historic Landmarks (T.H.)

TERRE HAUTE, IND., MONDAY, MAY 25, 1959.



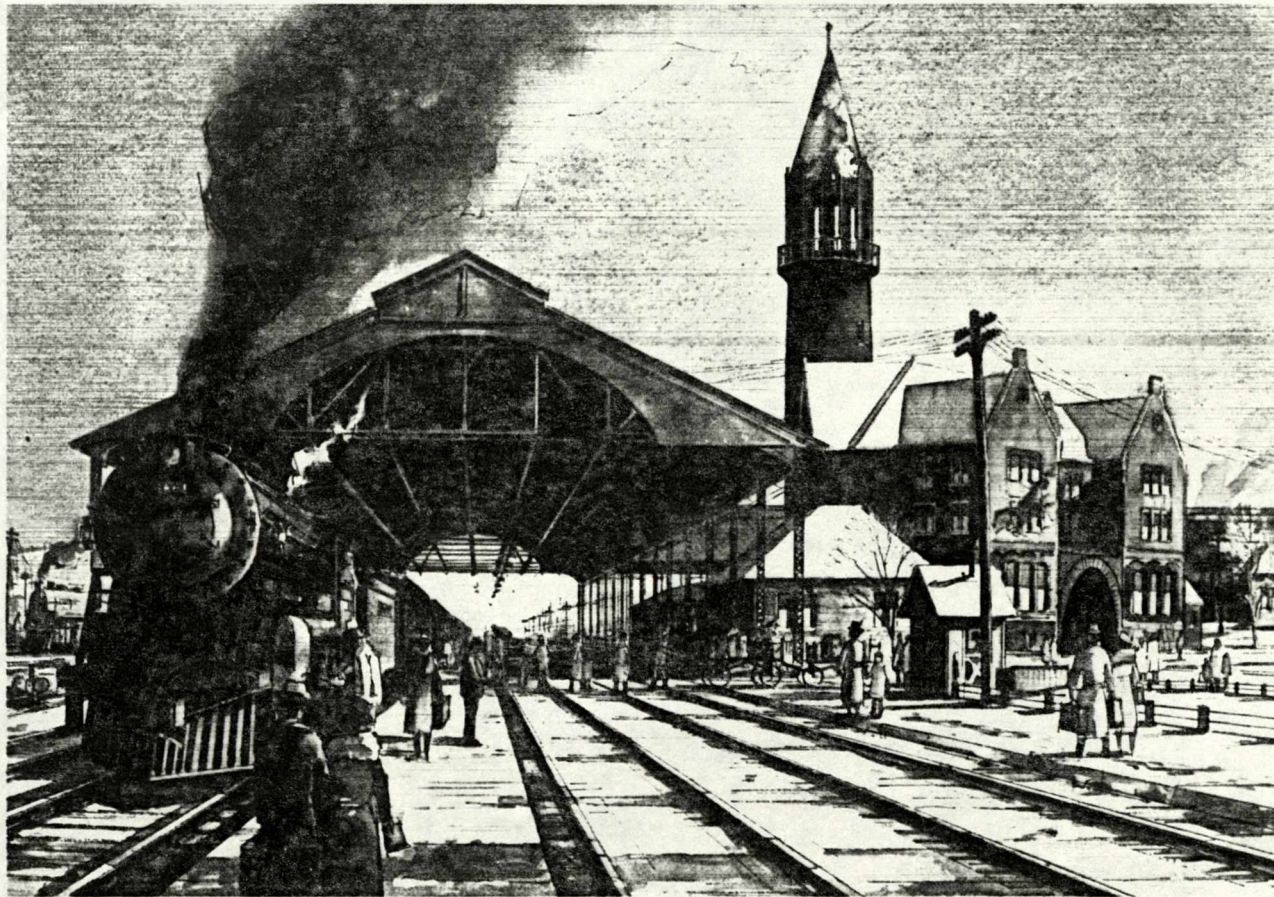
**LANDMARK TO PASS** — The Union Station, erected about 1895 and for many years a veritable beehive of activity, which serves the Pennsylvania and Chicago & Eastern Illinois railroads, will be razed before the end of the year and the property made available for other uses. The announcement was made over the weekend by the Pennsylvania Railroad. Decision as to a permanent passenger facility here will not be made until after the future of the old station site and park area is settled, it was stated. In the meantime the building currently housing the Railway Express Company will be converted to provide a temporary ticket office and waiting room. The railroad is open to purchase offers and development suggestions for the station site and park, according to H. H. Vaughn, southwestern regional manager. The several-story building now is inefficient, needing aesthetic repairs to the exterior and a new roof, heating system and other essential items to serve through another Winter. It is hoped that by consolidating facilities for the present in the Railway Express Building to achieve a more efficient and economical operation and pave the way toward new development in the park and old station area, he concluded.



FROM A WATER COLOR BY  
D. OMER SEAMON

RAILROADS - T.H. 1-69

(TAKEN FROM CHRISTMAS CARD -  
IN ARCHIVES)

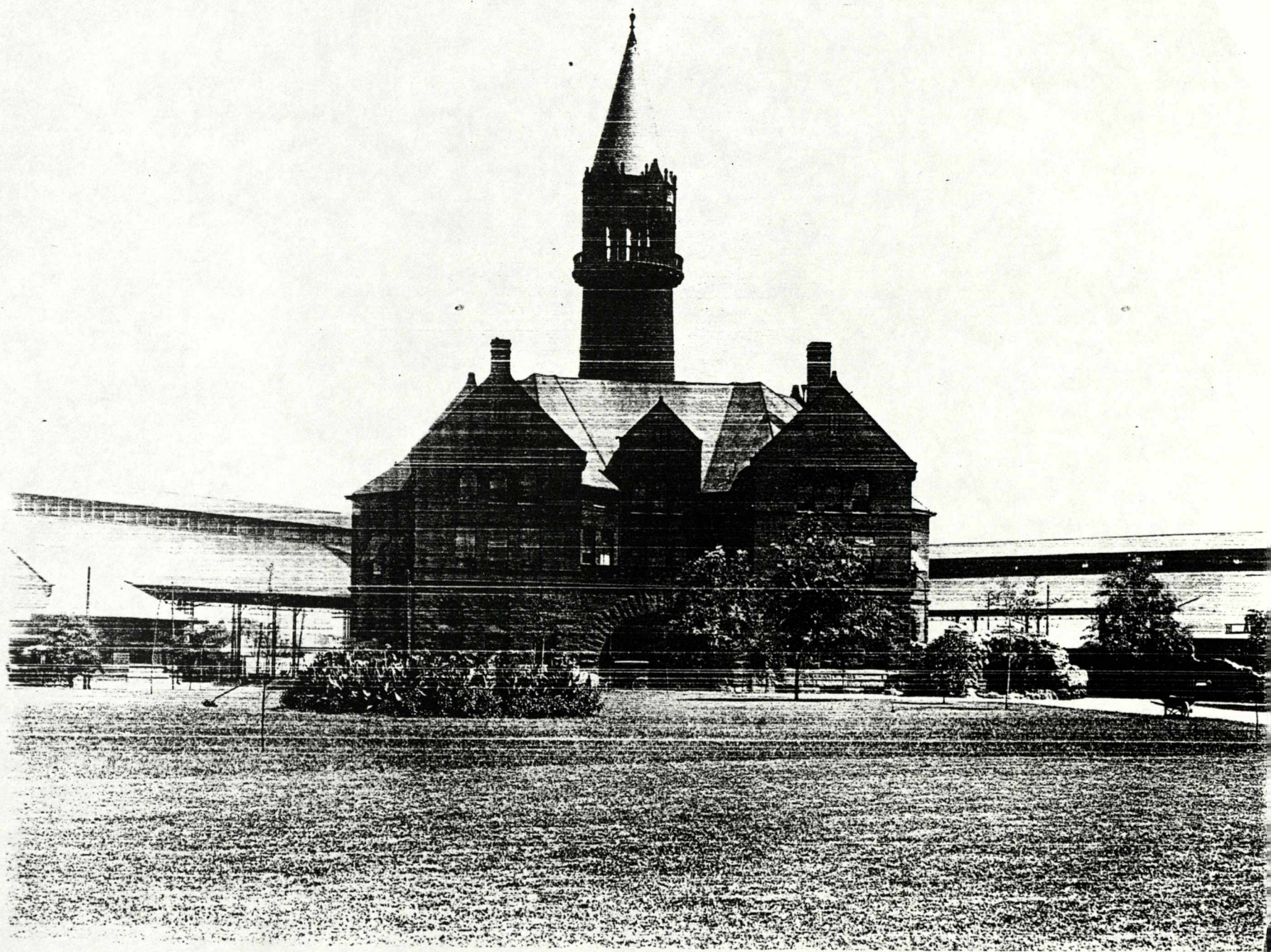


UNION STATION



Haute Ind  
in Depot

original in Archives

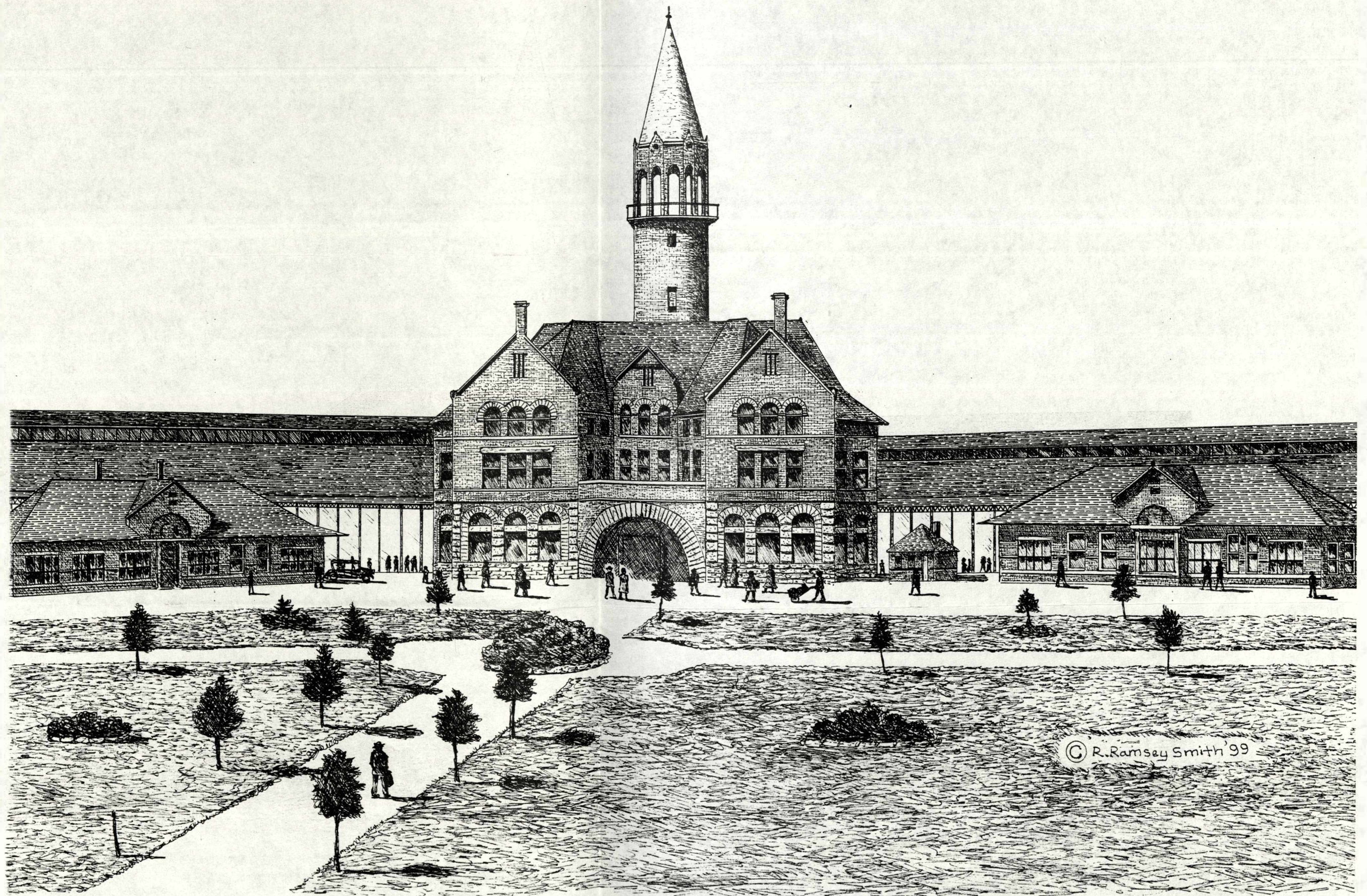


UNION DEPOT.



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85%



Terre Haute Union Station  
(late 1920s)



Dear Sir,

Sorry for the delay of my drawing of the Terre Haute Union Station.  
I also sent one to the Vigo County Historical Society. Enjoy!

Robert R. Smith

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Michigan City IN 46360



5.38	+18	Stricycia	48.36	+92
3.94	+12	StewStev	34	+52
1.98	-12	SturmR	80	-15
15.05	+52	SunMicro	4.20	+14
14.01	-07	Sunair	4.78	+28
7.83	+38	SunriseSen	33.50	+123
18.10		SunTrst	1.80	+103
10.35	+14	Supvalu	58	+47
7.31	+01	SykesEn	10.05	+85
13.56	+75	Symantec	86.72	+37
13.65	+33	Synovus	68	+52
23.50	+105	Sysco	52	+72
36.58	+73	SystCpt	15.30	+48
38.95	+15	TCW	16	+04
35.82	+76	TECO	76	+09
15.17	-19	TJX	14	-32
32.66	+04	TJX Corp	50	+05
32.40	+93	Target	28	+51
41.03	+64	TelMexL	1.12	+90
42.79	+203	Telabs	8.33	+60
39.24	+321	Telular	5.34	
14.20	+04	Templani	1.38	+73
18.90	+14	TmpGib	48	+07
38.20	+24	Tengsco	74	
14.05	+59	TrcoAut	5.49	+11
36.65	+11	Textinst	09	+104
2.67	-31	Textron	1.30	+113
1.96	-04	Thornbg	2.52	+30
7.79	-01	3Com	8.00	+14
7.74	+66	3M Co s	1.32	+40
1.15	-10	Tiffany	20	-59
40.00	+100	TimeWarr	15.99	+42
7.41	+23	ToyRU	12.77	-19
11.27	-05	TrackData	01	-148
25	-40	TrCda g	1.08	+09
7.04	+30	Tredgar	16	+29
1.18	+79	Trinityln	24	+52
4.93	+93	Tycolint	05	+54
14.45	+115	UGI s	1.14	+54
16.49	+40	vjUSG	15.48	+29
1.17	+45	UniSrcEn	80	+05
1.15	+03	UnionPac	92	+16
3.59	+58	UPPlanters	1.33	+82
4.22	+101	UPInt pLE	2.00	+64
7.02	+32	Unisys	16.40	+46
1.28	+36	UrdAuto	40	+84
3.35	+05	UrdInse	33.10	-08
8.80	+18	UPS B	1.00	+63
25	+40	UtdRentr	18.26	+51
3.54	+82	US Bancrp	82	+12
4.40	+06	US Enr	2.58	-02
6.28	+23	USSteel	20	-40
7.77	+13	UtdTech	1.40	+129
1.73	+02	Unocal	80	+27
3.66	+108	VarianM	65.77	+158
2.20	-25	Vectren	1.14	+01
4.08	+21	Veritas	38.43	+147
7.50	+45	VerizonCm	1.54	-31
3.31	+31	Viacom	24	-28
4.40	+18	ViacomB	24	+81
1.08	+16	ViadCp	36	+91
3.58	+01	Vishay	20.05	+34
7.70	+52	Vitesse	7.20	+83
3.06	+13	Vodafone	29	+136
1.39	-19	Wabash	24.70	+42
15	+35	Wachovia	1.40	-32
1.98	+79	WalMart	36	+45
22	+17	Walgrn	17	+10
1.15	+36	WAMull	1.64	+45
8.88	+34	WRIT	1.49	+71
7.60	+75	WsteMinc	01	+43
25	-44	WatsnPh	43.26	+137
10	+06	WeinRt	2.34	+78
3.31	+50	WeisMk	1.12	+57
10	+100	Wellmn	36	-04
1.18	+45	WellpHt	87.42	+149
1.12	+01	WellsFrge	1.80	+80
1.01	+28	Wendys	24	+27
1.01	+30	WestarEn	76	-05
1.01	+67	WWirelss	18.74	+59
1.01	+09	Weyerh	1.60	+54
1.01	+65	Whripl	1.36	-42
1.01	+42	WhiteElec	9.00	+45
1.01	+07	WnoieFd	58.73	-126
1.01	-02	WmsCos	04	+08
1.01	+139	WirelessT	12	-01
1.01	+23	WiscEn	80	+05
1.01	-02	WolkVW	22	+21
1.01	-05	WrlGate n	1.18	-11
1.01	+54	Wrigley	88	+52
1.01	+96	Wyeth	92	+145
1.01	+14	Wynn	19.95	-08
1.01	+91	XOMA	7.25	+41
1.01	+62	XcelEngy	56	+02
1.01	+40	Xcel pIA	2.70	+38
1.01	+45	Xerox	10.85	+38
1.01	73	Xicor	12.43	+119
1.01	13	Xilinx	35.04	-15
1.01	24	Xybrnaut	2.15	+191
1.01	57	Yahoo	42.53	+34
1.01	66	YuniBrid	34.54	+37
1.01	37	Zimmer	84.16	+58
1.01	16	Zoltek	4.42	+23
1.01	40	ZwaigTI	28	+03

In its monthly crop production report, the USDA revised its pro-

The soybean crop is expected to total 203.2 million bushels, a drop

below last year. That would make the crop the nation's smallest since 1996.

# WABASH VALLEY

P R O F I L E S

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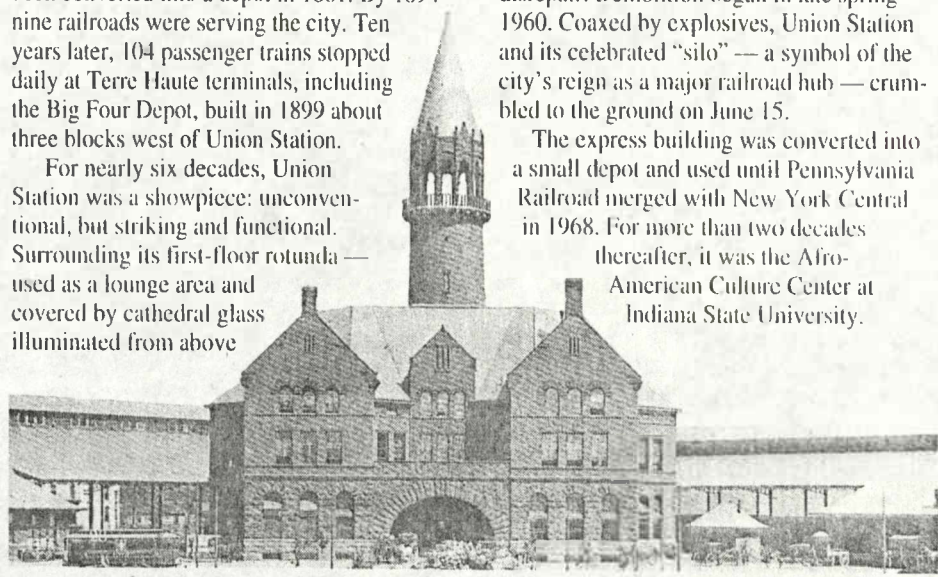
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Terre Haute Tribune-Star  
 Thursday Nov 13, 2003 p. A9

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- \$5.31 troy oz., N.Y. Merc  
 - \$175.00 per 76 lb flask,  
 - \$763.00 troy oz., N.Y.